

Childhood in Africa



**Edited by
Chris Woodward**

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The Woodward

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Dedication

This book is dedicated to our beloved father Josiah Woodward and our mothers, Irene and Hilda, who set the circumstances for much of the lives we subsequently led.

"We would all also like to add our love for the African lands in which we lived, particularly Zimbabwe. One can never shed the love and feeling we have for that land - it is almost a matter of one's blood being affected forever. We love the wonderful forgiving people of that land; we love its savannah terrain, those delightful native msasa trees, the rocky outcrops, the ruddy soil, the elephant grass, the animal life, the farmers who did so much in times of drought to succour that life. We could go on and on."

Gwen, Peter, Susan, Chris, John and Paula

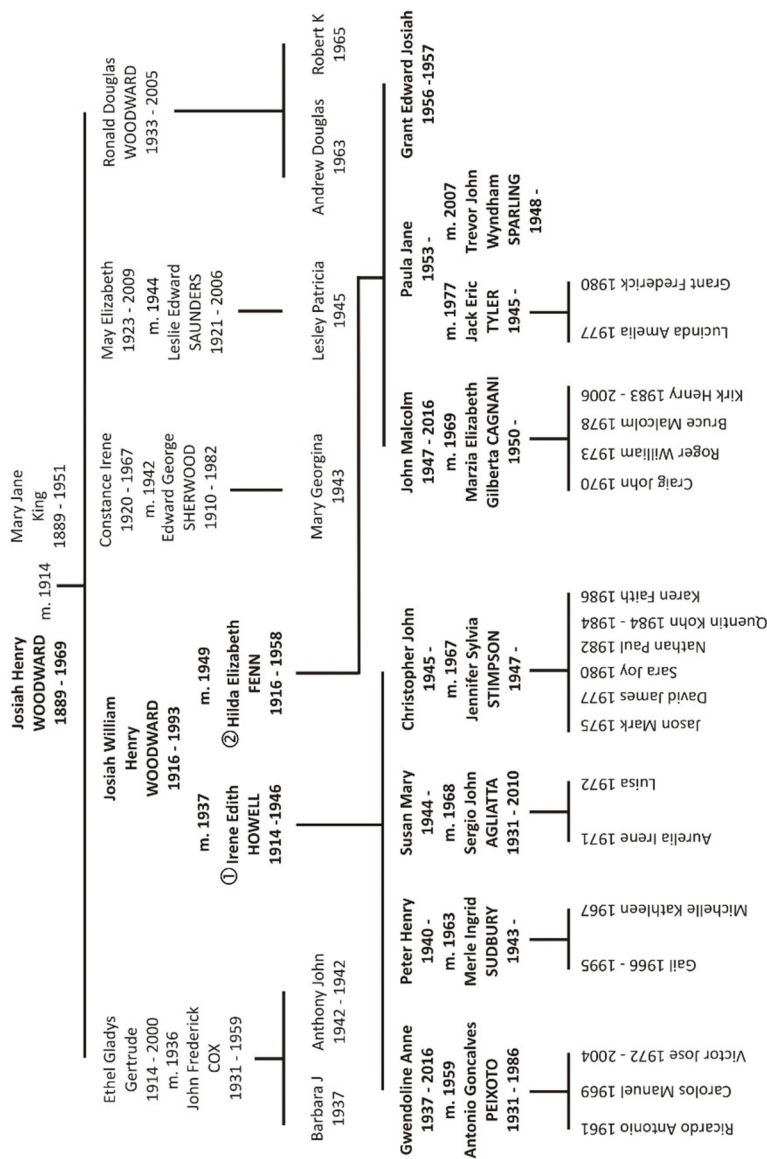


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Family Tree

WOODWARD FAMILY TREE



Family Timeline

1889	Granddad Josiah Henry Woodward born.
1916	Father Josiah William Henry Woodward (Joe) born, part of a family of 5 children.
1930	Joe starts work, aged 14, to help support family.
1937	Joe marries Irene Edith Howell. They Live in 19 Minet Drive, Hayes. Gwen born.
1939	Outbreak of WWII. Joe now a Signaller.
1940	Peter born.
1944	Sue born.
1945	Chris born.
1946	Irene Woodward dies.
1947	Joe develops relationship with Hilda Barnes. Peter and Gwen enter Spurgeons orphanage in Reigate. Sue goes to Grandma Howell. Chris stays with foster parents in father's house. Joe leaves GWR to sell oil. Joe sets off to Enugu, Nigeria to work on Railways. John born to Hilda.
1949	Hilda Barnes (nee Fenn) and Joe marry Peter and Gwen take ship to Cape Town from Southampton.
1950	Sue takes ship to Cape Town from Southampton and joins Gwen and Peter at Fairbridge, near Bulawayo, South Rhodesia. Hilda, Chris and John take ship to Lagos from Liverpool. Joe, Hilda, John and Chris live in Enugu, Nigeria.
1952	Return by air from Nigeria to UK. Hilda, Joe and the boys leave for Cape Town from London. July, Joe, Hilda, Chris and John arrive in Southern Rhodesia. The whole family lives initially in a rented house on corner of Jameson Avenue and Park Street, Salisbury. Family moves to 8 Cedar Avenue, Lochinvar, Salisbury.
1953	Pauline (Paula) born. Gwen goes to live at Lady Stanley's Girl's home.
1956	Peter completes Cambridge School Leaving Certificate.
1957	Birth of Grant and death 5 months later.
1958	November, Hilda dies.
1959	Paula starts school at Lochinvar for one term, then away to Vumba in the Eastern Highlands of Rhodesia for one term; then to

	Routledge, Harare as a boarder. Gwen marries Tony.
1960+	Joe lives with Fran Brockwell in her house at 8 Mull Road, Belvedere for a short while. John joins British South Africa Police. Joe and children move to Adamas Court, Avondale - last home for Chris.
1961	Chris gets Cambridge General certificate.
1963	Chris gets Cambridge Higher School Certificate. Peter marries Merle.
1964	Joe has first heart attack. Joe meets Megan on safari. Sue leaves to spend time in UK. Paula leaves to live in UK. Chris leaves to spend 8 months working at copper mine in Zambia and then goes to the UK, via Capetown, to attend university in London.
1965	Joe moves in with Megan at Montagu Court after second heart attack. Paula and Sue return to Rhodesia.
1967	Chris graduates and marries Jenny in UK.
1968	Sue marries Sergio.
1969	John marries Marzia.
1970	Joe marries Megan. Joe and Megan move to Trail Road, Mt Pleasant, Harare (name for Salisbury after 1980 independence)
1973	Paula marries and separates following year.
1977	Paula marries Jack in the UK.
1980	Joe retires from the Railways, and buys a bookmaking business. Paula, Jack and their children move to Zimbabwe.
1982	Gwen, Tony and boys move down to Johannesburg, South Africa.
1986	Paula, Jack and children move back to UK.
1988/89	Joe and Megan move to town house in Fife Avenue, near Greenwood Park on Seventh Street, Harare.
1993	Joe passes away.

Introduction

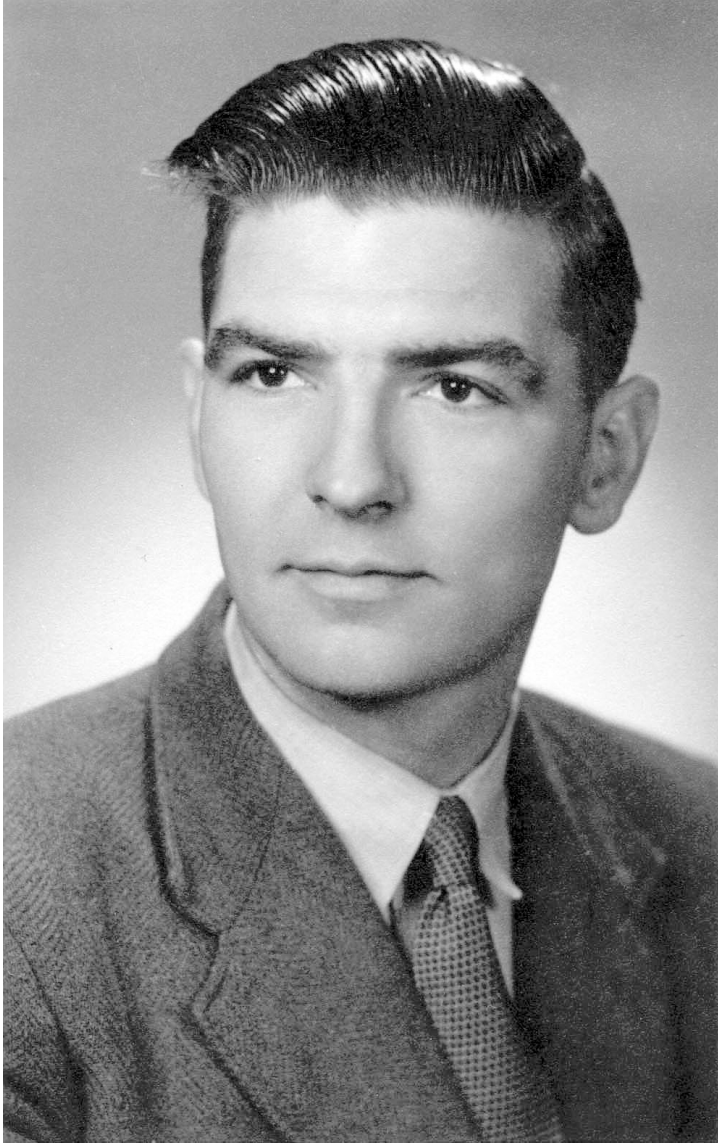
We encounter a very different world to the one we know today as we follow the story of Josiah William Henry Woodward, or Joe as he preferred to be known, from his humble birth in 1916. Forced to leave school early, he began a career in the railways, first in England and then later in Africa at the end of the colonial period. He would love and marry three times, suffer deep personal loss and have to temporarily give up his children.

His life is viewed through the experiences of us, his children, who also lived in post-war Britain, and then grew up in Rhodesia, now Zimbabwe. We were ourselves both harshly treated at some points in our lives, when sent off on our own into strange worlds, and loved at others, when the opportunity arose to be a family again.

Joe had his human flaws, but he could look on with pride as his children developed their own lives, careers, successes (and occasional setbacks), way beyond the opportunities open to him.

Take a step back in time for a story of lives and experiences of one family in Britain and Africa from a period that is gradually disappearing from living memory.

**Josiah William Henry Woodward,
Joe**



Joe c. 1936

Josiah Woodward, known as Joe to friends and family, lived through a period of momentous change in the 20th century. Widowed twice and married a third time, he found himself responsible for a family that expanded from four to seven children, of which six survived into adulthood. Joe made some life changing choices for his family, at a time when the Empire was recovering from a major war and beginning to change from a colonial power to part of a Commonwealth. Here is his story in outline.



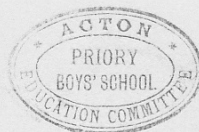
Josiah WH and Ethel GG c. 1918

Joe was born in Acton on the 7th February 1916, one son of 5 children. His father, Josiah Henry was a railwayman and the grandchildren still have memories of him in his railwayman's black pants with the red stripe down the side, boots and peaked cap. We don't know much about Grandma Woodward, but she was always understood to be of Romany gipsy stock. Her eldest grandchild Gwen was a bit frightened of her, but she never frightened the second oldest, Peter. The only memory he has of her is standing over the stove, stirring something in the pot, with a cigarette dangling from her mouth and coughing like mad.

By all accounts, Grandad was a strict and heavy-handed man. When Joe suffered rheumatic fever in his mid teens, which weakened his heart, his dad used to grab him by the ear and tell him that he'd get over it. Joe never spoke kindly of his father.

With money tight, Joe did a paper and bread round whilst at school. Despite being a bright scholar, he was forced to leave school on the 30th March 1930, shortly after becoming 14. As the eldest son, he had to help support the family, didn't he! His son Peter still has the testimonial from the Headmaster.

3695



March 31st. 1930.

Joniah Broadwood has been a pupil in this School for years.

He has spent a full year in the 6th Standard.

He has a wonderfully good record for regularity & punctuality.

He is top boy of the School, quick & intelligent; so ready & willing to help as to be sometimes impetuous; trustworthy in every respect (he has had a good testing) - in fact, a boy who will always do his level best.

S. Lewis

Head Master

Testimonial



Mary Jane King c. 1930



Josiah William Woodward c. 1930

The very next day, Joe started work as a railway porter at Paddington. Grandma did not have a say in the matter and, as it happens, benefitted in the long run by Joe slipping his mother a few bob every now and then, to spend on herself or to simply feed the smoking habit.

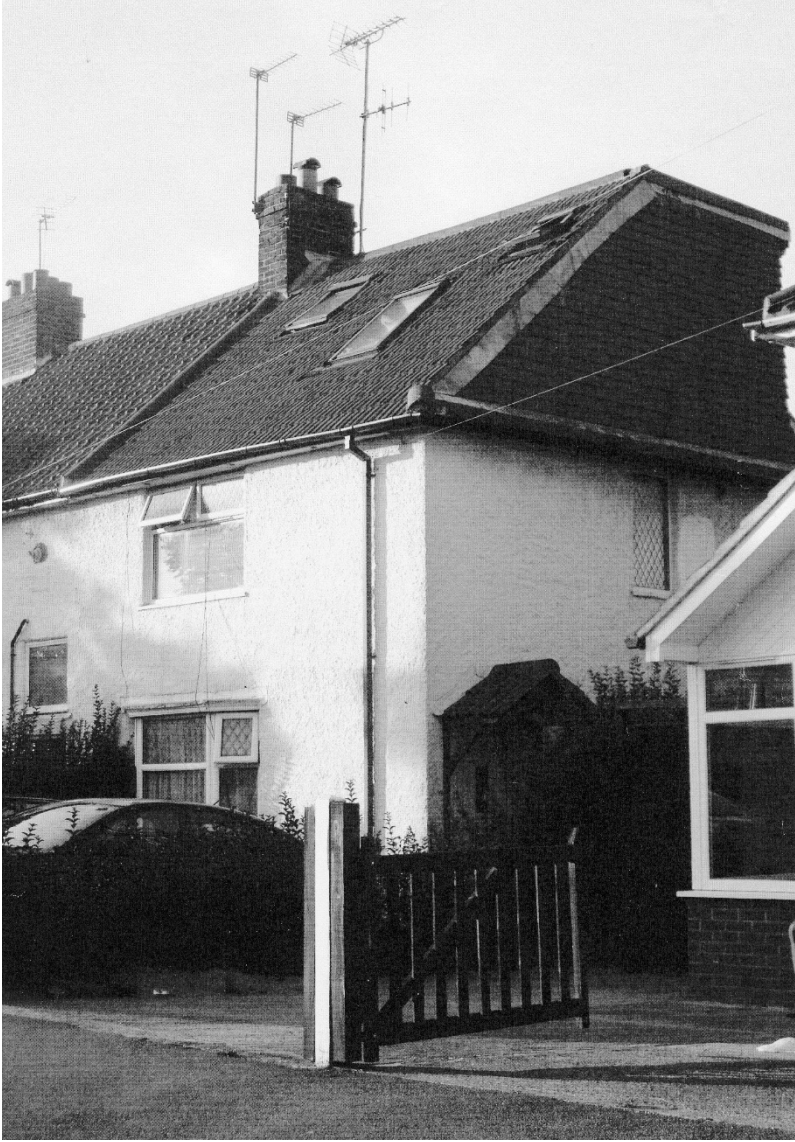
Joe found love in the diminutive beauty, Irene Edith Howell. As an old family friend and neighbour remembered, Irene saw through the pugnacious young man's exterior to the good within. They married hurriedly in June 1937, as daughter Gwen was on the way! This was something for which Irene's father never quite forgave Joe. The GWR (Great Western Railway) provided them with housing at 19 Minet Drive, Hayes, in West London, which was within walking distance of Joe's job.



Irene Howell c. 1935



Joe and Irene's wedding with Josiah W Woodward, Ada and Reginald Howell, June 1935



19 Minet Drive, Hayes, c. 1995

By the beginning of WWII in 1939, Joe had advanced to become a signalman. This was critical work during the war years, and despite attempting to enlist three times, he had to settle for a more frustrating time of long hours and additional home-guard duty, made all the more difficult by the poor relationship with the officer in charge. A reaction to authority figures was a common characteristic of Joe's and later, his sons.

Despite the war years, family life in the Woodward household was a happy one. Gwendoline (Gwen) was born in December 1937. Peter followed in 1940, Susan (Sue) in 1944 and Chris in 1945. Joe kept greyhounds and the family would go for walks in the park. Joe and Irene loved to dance. Their transport was a tandem bicycle with a sidecar.

Tragedy struck in 1946. Irene had become pregnant again. Rather than have the child, Joe and Irene decided to have an abortion. Abortion was still illegal at that time, so the practice was carried out secretly and without proper medical care in backstreets. Both the practitioner and the woman seeking abortion would have felt the full weight of the law if found out. Unfortunately, like many other women in her situation, Irene caught an infection which turned to blood poisoning. Wracked with pain as the poison spread through her body over several weeks, Irene died in September 1946.

Death in motherhood was a grim reality prior to the introduction of the National Health Service in 1948. When Gwen was born in 1937, 1 in 250 mothers died of a variety of causes as a consequence of pregnancy and childbirth. Complications after illegal abortion accounted for about a fifth of the deaths, infections mainly for the rest. During the war years, the risks decreased. In 1946 the maternal death rate had dropped to about 1 in 800, with backstreet abortions at the time Irene sought one causing one tenth of those deaths (1 in 8000). The hazards of motherhood declined dramatically in the following years, and now maternal deaths in the UK due to abortion are less than 5 per million abortions.



Irene (née Howell) and Josiah Woodward with Peter and Gwen, c. 1941

A family torn asunder

Joe had lost his wife. How could he look after the children? He must have tried and then come to some heavy decisions. The children remember that by April 1947, Chris, the youngest at 18 months, lived with foster parents Annie and Edward Tappin at the home address in 19 Minet Drive and Sue, age 3, went to live with Grandma Howell. The oldest, Gwendoline, now aged 9, and Peter, aged 7 went to the Spurgeons orphanage at Reigate. Why did Joe choose Spurgeons? There was a family link with the Baptist Church nearby and Peter remembers that the Baptist Minister came to the house after Irene's death, to pray for the family. This could have been the route to Spurgeons.

Spurgeons had been set up by the leading Baptist preacher and writer Charles Haddon Spurgeon and his associates in 1867. It was initially for fatherless boys as an alternative to the workhouses. Spurgeon envisaged a practical response to the Bible's teaching and aimed to provide orphaned and vulnerable children in London with shelter, education and the hope of a better future. By 1877, girls were also accepted into the Stockwell Orphanage in South London and over 500 children lived there.

Spurgeons was mainly intended for fatherless children, but Joe's situation obviously warranted help. For Joe's children to enter the orphanage, the most likely initial point of contact would have been a referral by his local church. There would have been formalities, such as providing birth certificates and also an idea of Joe's income, as parents were asked to provide some financial contribution, according to their means. It must have seemed the best temporary solution out of a range of difficult ones.

During the war, the orphanage was relocated for a while to a large house in Reigate. Records for this period are sparse. Initially, the boys lived in sheds on the grounds, before later moving into the house. At Spurgeons in Reigate, the children were generally grouped with individual House Mothers or Matrons. In addition to regular meals and a roof over their head, they were clothed and had large grounds for games. They would

have gone to the local schools. Some children had the option of going to visit relatives during the holidays, whilst others stayed throughout.

For the children, it must have been traumatic after years of a happy home. Mother dying, being split up, and the oldest being sent away to an orphanage, even if visits were promised. Gwendoline and Peter certainly remember family visiting, but not Joe.

Joe's life changed. First, he left GWR to sell oil for another company in the South East of England for a short while. He had built up a relationship with Hilda Barnes, who was at that time in an unhappy marriage and desperate for a child, which her present husband could not give her. Joe met that need and Hilda became pregnant in 1947. Their son John was born in September 1947.

Joe was not there for the birth. He had set off one month earlier, to go to Nigeria to work on the railways, leaving a heavily pregnant Hilda behind. They must have stayed in touch – and in love, because eighteen months after leaving for Nigeria, Joe returned and married Hilda on the 2nd April 1949.

Shortly after the wedding, the eldest two children, Gwendoline and Peter, arrived back at the family home of Minet Drive. Joe was looking to rebuilding his future and family in Africa. The children were taken out of Spurgeons orphanage and sent on their own, first by boat and then by train, to the Rhodesia Fairbridge Memorial College (RFMC), near Bulawayo, as boarders.

Rhodesia Fairbridge Memorial College was on the site of a disused RAF airbase outside of Bulawayo. The barracks were converted into dormitories and the primary school was run in the old RAF Operation Rooms. From the age of 11, children attended the high schools alongside local students.



Hilda Barnes (née Fenn) born 1916. Photo c. 1940



Josiah and Hilda's wedding, April 1949



Peter, Sue and Gwen, c. 1946

RFMC differed from other Fairbridge institutions by focussing on education. They were equipped with the skills to fill positions of authority, in a country where unskilled farm labour was generally done by low paid black workers. Between 1946 and 1962, 276 children had been sent there. (Peter says he and Gwen were number 113 and 112 on the College's list). They experienced mixed fortunes at a time when the country was undergoing major political change culminating in the Unilateral Declaration of Independence of Southern Rhodesia in 1965.

In 1950, Joe returned to the UK to arrange for Sue to travel to Africa under the auspices of Fairbridge. He went with her by train from Paddington to Southampton, where he gave a steward with red hair at least 10 shillings and asked him to look after Sue. She sailed to Cape Town on the 26th October 1950 and joined her older brother and sister at the RFMC.



Entrance to Rhodesia Fairbridge
Memorial College c. 1940



John, Hilda and Chris on SS Calumet
outside Port Harcourt 1950

On the 22nd December 1950, Hilda travelled on a boat to Lagos, Nigeria from Liverpool, taking the youngest sons, Chris and John with her. From then on, they lived in Enugu, Nigeria for a couple of years.

In 1952, Hilda and the younger boys flew back with Joe to the UK from Nigeria for a brief stay before leaving for Cape Town from London. From there they travelled to Salisbury, Southern Rhodesia, where Joe had a new job with the railways.

Joe had temporarily rented a house on the corner of Jameson Avenue and Park Street in Salisbury, where they were joined by Gwen and Sue. Peter was at Scout camp at the time and met his father for the first time in a long while at Salisbury Station, in December 1952, about five months after Dad's arrival in S Rhodesia.

Within a short time, the whole family moved to a house at 8 Cedar Avenue, Lochinvar on the newly built railway estate where they would spend a happier time together.

Pauline was born in March 1953 and as she grew up, her physical likeness to Hilda captivated Joe.



8 Cedar Avenue, Lochinvar, Harare, c. 1993



Joe and Hilda, Durban,
March, 1954



Hilda, Gwen and Joe celebrating at
Lochinvar Club, c. 1957

At this point in his life, Joe is remembered with different emotions by his children and we will hear more of this in their own words. The family was held together by the loving Hilda, who treated all the children as her own. An artistic woman, Hilda could pick up any instrument and play it within a short while. She also excelled at drawing. A beautiful woman, she matched the charmer Joe, who acted as magnet to other women and would flirt outrageously with them but kept his love for Hilda alone.

Together, they enjoyed parties at the Railway club and would come back carousing in the 1938 V8 Ford that was now the family car. On the other hand, they could argue and indeed, once Hilda was all set to walk out on him. But there are also memories of the younger children waking on a Sunday morning and joining Hilda and Joe on their big double bed. Joe took the family on holidays and picnics, and there are happy memories of going to the Mermaids Pool.



Family at Mermaids Pool, c. 1952



Woodward children on beach near
Margate, Natal, 1958

Joe decided that Gwen should leave the home at age 16, in 1954. She moved to the Lady Stanley's Girls Hostel in Salisbury and appears to have enjoyed the different environment amongst women of her own age. She still came home to visit occasionally.

Peter completed his Cambridge school-leaving certificate in 1956, at the age of 16 and began work, eventually taking up a permanent job with the newly established Central Bank.

Another son, Grant, was born in 1956. Unfortunately, he died a couple of months later due to his hole-in-the-heart condition, which doctors said they could not operate on until he was two years old.

The last family holiday with everyone, bar Gwen, was in 1958 at the Fairy Glen Hotel, Margate, Natal, South Africa. That same year Hilda became ill and increasingly housebound. She was rushed off to hospital whilst Joe was still at work. He dashed back to be by her side. Hilda died shortly afterwards in hospital, in November 1958



Grant Woodward b. 1956 Baptism Certificate 16 December 1956

Joe managed to keep the family together, with Sue taking over the housekeeping, and, after the shock of Hilda's death, the family did have happy experiences in the following years.

By 1961, Joe had found a new partner in Fran Brockwell, who had two children of her own. Friction between Joe's children and Fran's meant that the relationship fell apart after a short while and the family moved to Adamas Court, Avondale, Salisbury.



Adamas Court, Avondale, Harare – last home for Chris Woodward. Photo c.1993

John had joined the South Africa Police cadets by that time and by 1961, Chris completed his Cambridge Certificate. With Joe's support, he continued to go on to study for Cambridge Higher School Certificates, which he gained at the end of 1963.

The reminder of the family's life relating to Joe is summarised in a few key dates:

1959 – Gwen marries Tony, with Paula as bridesmaid. Joe and the family move from Lochinvar to Avondale

1963 – Peter marries Merle and leaves home.

1964 – Joe has his first heart attack whilst travelling at sea with Pauline and Sue back to the UK, though this is only diagnosed later. (Sue at twenty went to 'spread her wings', Paula at 11 was going to stay with, and be looked after, by Joe's sister Connie.)

1964 – Chris travels to UK to university

1964 – Joe meets Megan on a safari.

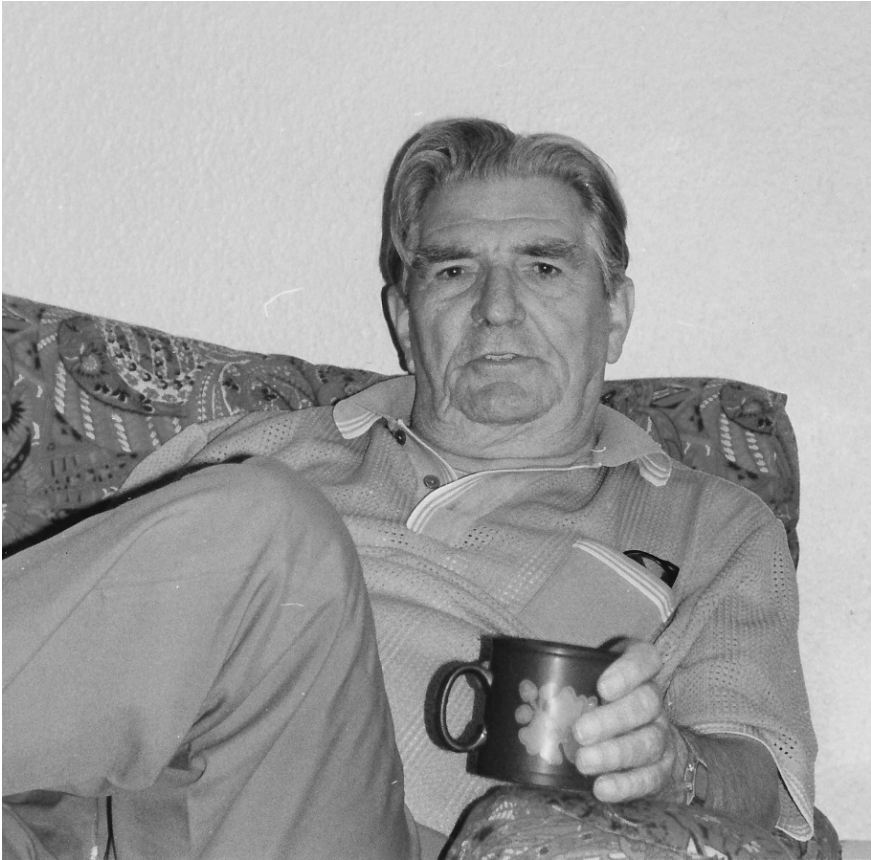
1964 – 1965 – Paula stays with Ron and Norma in England, then both Paula and Sue return to Rhodesia after Joe suffered a major heart attack. Paula and Sue travel with Gwen, Tony and Ricky who happened to be returning from a holiday in UK.

1965 – Joe moves in with Megan at Montagu Court after second heart attack and they marry in 1970. Megan was a highly intelligent woman who treated Sue and Paula kindly whilst they lived with her. Megan also had two sons, Guy and Chris.

Joe finally passes away in December of 1993, aged 77.

Josiah Woodward was a child from humble origins who worked hard to improve his circumstances, taking a chance of a new future in Africa, working on the railways. Depending on the prism through which he was viewed, he was a hard man, a ladies' man, a faithful and loving husband

with three wives. Joe knew how to party, but was also mindful of his expenses. He could be a harsh father, proud father and doting father. In the absence of his direct testimony, we can only gain glimpses of Josiah Woodward through the eyes of his children. Their stories follow.



Joe Woodward, 1916 – 1993, October 1989

Gwendoline Anne Woodward, Born 10 December 1937



Gwen, aged about 10

I remember going with Irene to visit Grandma Howell's home and Granddad Howell once saying, "You are not like your mother - you fidget, fidget, fidget". I always felt mum's love, but was always trying, unsuccessfully it seems, to please dad. I don't know why I never thought he loved me; there was no physical abuse, just the occasional smacks at most. I do remember being chased by Mum up the path as she waved the stick she used to stir clothes in a hot tub! Mum and I used to toast

crumpets in the fire in the lounge – with forks fashioned from wire coat hangers.

After Peter was born, I used to push him in the push chair in the garden.

I remember more of Dad than Irene, who often wore a ribbon in her hair. He used to bathe Peter and me in a tub in front of the front-room fire, as well as test our hair for nits. We had weekly baths in the tin bath, set up in the kitchen of our house, which was a basic 2-up and 2-down. I also remember Dad chasing Irene around their washing machine.



Dad and Irene, c. 1938

Dad had greyhounds, which I used to walk in the morning before going to school. On Sundays we would often walk to Hayes Park where I would push Peter, although it may have been Sue, in the pram. Sometimes Dad and Irene would race ahead – Irene always won, but Dad may have let her. Once I was almost assaulted by the park keeper!

Dad and Irene had a tandem bicycle with a sidecar. We also used a bicycle with a crossbar seat and a seat over the rear wheel. When I had to go to hospital to have my tonsils taken out, Dad took me there on the crossbar of his bike. I fought to avoid the needle that probably contained the sedative and it broke in my leg.

Peter and I used to take meals to Dad while he was at his signal box at Hayes station. Occasionally Dad would let us pull the levers. Irene used to wait at the gate for Dad to return after home-guard duty and they'd cuddle at the gate. My friend Shirley's parents used to refer to Mum as "Little Mrs Woodward". Shirley and I stayed in touch for a long time, writing letters to each other.

Aunt Molly used to visit in her Wren's uniform, and the two of them would laugh at me as I strutted around with Molly's sling bag on my shoulder.

During the war, I remember sleeping under a big steel table in the house. This was a "Herbie" Morrison shelter, used by those who didn't have enough garden space for Anderson garden shelters. One day, while walking to Townfield school, probably with Peter, a man grabbed us and jumped into a ditch when an air raid was on and covered us with his arms to protect us.

During the ration years, I would often stand in queues for food before school. Irene used to come along later so I could get along to school. Mum also used to make a lot of girls' clothes for us and the family.

I recall watching Dad and Irene dancing – Irene in a mustard-orange dress, which flew up as she danced (possibly the jitter bug) showing off her legs. I used to make tea and Sunday morning breakfast, as well as go to the shops. There was singing at the piano and holding pegs while Irene hung out the washing. I used to go to Junos, the Baptist Church version of Brownies. Dad also went to the Baptist Church at 136 Coldharbour Lane, about 200 yards north of junction with Minet Drive – but I cannot remember Irene going there, maybe because this was after Irene's death.

Dad was the boss, but I never thought that Irene's pre-marriage pregnancy caused any problem between Dad and me.

I can't remember Mum going into hospital. It was a couple of weeks or months (Aunt Molly believes it was two weeks) after Ken, Irene's brother, married Jean (Leibermann), that Mum died in September 1946 with complications that followed an abortion. On the way home from school one day afterwards, I hit a neighbourhood red-haired girl with freckles and spectacles after she made fun of Irene's death by calling out "Ha, ha, ha. Glad your mum's dead".



Ken and Ada Howell with Gwen, c. 1939



Josiah, Jack, Ethel and Edward's sister, July 1916

After Mum's death, I recall staying in someone's house that had an outside toilet. I wanted someone to go with me but was told, "Only wicked people are afraid of the dark". My nightmares probably started then – and recurred often while at the Spurgeons orphanage. I went to stay with Auntie Ethel (Joe's elder sister) for a while and she wanted to keep me, but Dad wouldn't allow it. My Uncle Jack used to frighten me with his false front teeth.



Spurgeons, c. 2004



Reginald and Ada Howell with
Ken, c. 1930

Then it was Spurgeons for the next 2-3 years. I was nearly nine, and Peter, six, when we were placed in Spurgeons orphanage in Reigate, Surrey. Peter lived in the St David's building. We believe Dad must have made this arrangement by the end of 1946. Dad quit the railway and worked as a salesman for an oil company in the south east of England for a short period and then signed up to work in Nigeria. Aunty Molly came to see me, Aunties Ethel and Conny also visited, but I don't remember Dad visiting. Molly and Nanny Howell, with her round spectacles and bunned hair, used to visit. I loved Nan. I used to walk to the bus stop to meet them. I remember Molly brushing my hair and talking to me. We also used to visit Nanny a lot when Granddad Howell wasn't there as I was frightened of him. Molly reckons it was because he was distant and unapproachable.

I remember a teacher at Spurgeons we called Taddy Ballnut (due to the condition of his hair we assume). I hated Spurgeons.



Peter and Gwen at Trafalgar Square, London, April 1949

I have a vague memory of being in Minet Drive, and meeting Hilda there shortly after she had married Dad. This was during the couple of weeks between leaving Spurgeons and shipping out to Africa. I remember going to a fair and that Hilda was very quiet.

After about two weeks with Hilda and Dad at Minet Drive, on 14 April 1949, Peter and I left for Southampton by train. It was only two weeks after Hilda and Dad got married! I remember going to get our new uniforms and injections beforehand. Then it was on for Cape Town by ship. I dropped my stuffed lamb soft toy into the sea as the ship set off. I remember “crossing the line”; a nice time, watching others being thrown into the swimming pool, which had a balance pole across it. I was spoilt on board.



Peter and Gwen Woodward at Fairbridge, near Bulawayo, c.1950

From Cape Town we travelled on and into Southern Rhodesia by train. I travelled with three sisters (the Gatesmiths) and eight boys, and arrived at Fairbridge, Bulawayo on 1 May, 1949. Hilda used to write to me whilst I was there.

When the family eventually came together in Salisbury a couple of years later, I recall that I shared a room with Sue, while the three boys shared the main room.

Gwen and family moved down to Gwelo from Lochinvar in 1974, with a two-year spell in Bulawayo; husband Tony working as a Railways wagon examiner. (Tony was also an army reservist, mainly engaging him in convoy related duties during the years of insurgency in Rhodesia.) In October 1982, not long after Zimbabwe became an independent country, Gwen, Tony and their two younger boys, moved down to South Africa, son Ricky remaining in Bulawayo to continue his boiler-making apprenticeship; he subsequently moved down to Witbank, South Africa – a coal-mining area east of Pretoria. While Tony worked initially in a scrap yard he went back

to his trade working as a plasterer and tiler; Gwen worked in an admin role (bookkeeping and accounts payable), initially for a sugar supplier. They made occasion trips back to Zimbabwe. In 1983, when Joe came down to Johannesburg for his heart bypass (at Milpark Hospital, Parktown), Gwen visited every evening for 10 days. In 1986 Tony was tragically killed in a head on collision between two vehicles when returning from building-related out-of-town contract work. Son Carlos always lived with his parents, and when he and his wife set up their first home, Gwen moved in to live with them, until her death. Youngest son Victor passed away in 2004 following what appeared to be a self-inflicted drug overdose.

Chris Woodward's addition made in 2016



Gwen and Tony's wedding with Peter, Chris, Sue, Paula, Dad and John, October 1959



Gwen and Peter Woodward, c. 1945



Gwen at 70 with grandniece Grace

Peter Henry Woodward, Born 28 August 1940

My first recollections go back to the war period when Dad used to come up to my bedroom and put Gwen on one shoulder and me on the other and take us down to the air raid shelter in the back garden. I can still recall the intermittent noise of the German warplanes. I vividly remember taking Dad's dinner down to his signal box with one plate on top of the other and wrapped in newspaper and placed in Gwen's doll's pram! I can also remember trying to move the huge levers in Dad's signal box that were a bit higher than me, and the time when a three-pound incendiary bomb fell through the roof and rebounded through the window. I can hardly recall my mother's presence. My one and only recollection of Mum was when she was laying on the settee in the living room with her back to me wearing a red dressing gown. I do recall Auntie Jean and Uncle Ken's wedding in August 1946 as I was upset by the fact that Nanny Howell had made some jelly which I hated; she assured me that I did not have to eat it. Why I cannot recall Mum at that wedding remains a mystery.

My next recollection was when I was having a violin lesson and was called to the Headmaster's office. When I arrived there, I discovered Gwen sitting in a chair crying her eyes out. Dad was there. I was informed that my mother had passed away (that was in September 1946). I always regretted that I never had another violin lesson in my life!

Shortly after Mum died I recall the Baptist Minister coming to the house and wanting to pray for the family. Despite Dad's lack of faith due to his very sad loss (this he told me a long time thereafter), the minister knelt



Ken and Jean Howell's wedding, August 1946

down on the sitting room carpet and prayed for us – this man's courage really impressed Dad.

What took place thereafter is lost to my memory until Gwen and I ended up in Spurgeon's Orphanage in Reigate, Surrey. My memories there consist of canings on the hands, long nights of nightmares, wet beds and complete misery. I knew I was going to be sent to Africa and I took a friend's stamp album that I was going to swap for a lion skin! Suffice to say, I retained the stamp album for some time, while my unforgotten friend never got his lion skin! I do recall the matron being a very kind person and always dressed in tweed skirts! I remember Uncle Ron Woodward visiting us at Spurgeons one day – he gave me my first taste of a cigarette – I could only have been 7 or 8 years old.

My next memories are when the family was at 19 Minet Drive, where I told Dad that I did not want to go to Africa. I think by this time Hilda was there, but I am very hazy on this score. Suffice to say I lost my argument and was sent to bed with a hiding and no supper, which I did not really

want. The next day I can vividly recall being put on a train to go to Africa. I stood at the back of the Union Class steamship, the “Sterling Castle”, seeing England disappearing in the haze and questioning why Dad had abandoned me again!

My memory of that voyage, which left Southampton on 14 April 1949, was an abject fear of being tossed into the swimming pool as we crossed the equator – thank goodness that fear never became a reality! I cannot recall landing at Cape Town but do have vague memories of the 3-day trip up to Bulawayo. We passed through Bechuanaland, as it was known then, and saw a mass of black faces. Many Africans offered us night apes as pets (derived from the Afrikaans word nagapie, and also referred to as bush babies). Gwen and I arrived in Bulawayo on the 1 May 1949 when she was eleven going on twelve, and I was eight going on nine (See photo in previous chapter).

My period at Fairbridge Memorial College lasted until December 1952 and, while they were not exactly happy days, Gwen and I can consider ourselves lucky that we passed the IQ test that enabled us to be sent to Southern Rhodesia instead of Canada or Australia, where they only required labourers. But we were always running away.

The highlight of our stay at Fairbridge was receiving our pocket money of sixpence (6d) per week, which we utilised to buy sweets, a tin of condensed milk or a bottle of Marmite. I remember catching ringworm, from somebody who pinched my hat, and spending ten weeks in hospital recovering from a very contagious disease that necessitated my hair being shaved off like Yul Brynner. I was referred to by my fellow school children as “Fuzzy Wuzzy” and when I attempted to keep my hat on in class to hide my bald head, I was told in no uncertain terms by Mr Jackson, the teacher, to remove it immediately, much to the laughter of my class mates.

Our dormitories were tin huts set up for the war period; in the African sun they heated up during the day and during the cold nights of winter would creak and groan. Sleeping on your own in the hospital was a scary

experience. I spent a period in the hospital with something they could never sort out. This time I had some kind of worm in my feet that kept me hospitalised for 10 weeks, as the medical people were stymied as to what it was. The itching used to drive me mad! They finally killed it by freezing my hand and my foot.

Our headmaster, Robbie Robinson, a giant to us at 6 foot 6 inches, and probably weighing in at 250 pounds, was very handy with a cane and when we received “six of the best”, it was administered in three lots of two swipes each. We took pleasure in comparing bruises on our backsides to see who had the worst looking one. There was a chap called Geoff Wilkins who was born on the same day as I and we were always scrapping. In a rage one day I managed to break this young chap’s arm, which fortunately prevented any further scraps between the two of us. As a matter of interest, I met Geoff thirty-nine years later at a Fairbridge reunion, at which stage he offered to continue the fight, which I point blank refused!

We always had some kind of pet, ranging from spiders, snakes, lizards and owls. One day when walking in the bush with friends we came across a nest with 5 young owls and immediately grabbed one each and set off back to our dormitories with these amazing pets. Our first problem was how to feed them, and someone had a bright idea suggesting we catch mice. This was easy enough as there were many of these animals around at night in the dormitory, so we elected an executioner, who quite gladly caught these poor animals which were fed to our feathered friends. The owls grew up very quickly on this diet. I used to take my owl out into the bush with a long length of string tied to his leg. The owl would fly way and then come back to sit on my shoulder. After a few weeks I untied the string and let the owl free but very surprisingly, the owl returned to my shoulder. Unhappily the following day it flew away never to return.

A good friend Roger Lumley collected snakes and he kept these in his bedside locker with his clothes in his suitcase under his bed. Roger had almost every type of snake – there were lots around in Bulawayo in those

days – but he never caught a black mamba – thank goodness. He and I got our photographs on the front page of the Bulawayo Chronicle together with the story of the young Fairbridge boys and their amazing pets.

Sue joined Gwen and me at Fairbridge in 1950, about mid-year. Gwen came running over to me from the girls' dormitories to tell me very excitedly that our sister was coming and we both ran up to the main gate to meet the bus. I can remember seeing Sue at that time but our life thereafter at Fairbridge is extremely vague. Gwen and I spent a few weekends with Auntie Jean and Uncle Ken (Irene's brother) at their flat, and I vividly recall holding baby Basil. They came to see us now and again. Usually, we were mostly farmed out to many strange people during the school holidays.

On one of these occasions I went to a farmer in Que Que (now Kwekwe), round about 1950. One day I noticed the farm labourers were running away from something. I went to investigate only to find a rather large puff adder on the ground. The locals have an inherent fear of snakes or 'nyoka' as known in Shona. I fearlessly and rather stupidly picked the snake up by the tail and went to show my host how proud I was with my find! I think that God was with me that day as the snake, which has a very venomous bite that could kill, was obviously stunned by stones thrown by the labourers. When I finally found the farmer and he realised what I was holding he screamed at me that I should throw the snake down. His shouting scared the life out of me and I quickly did as I was told but was most alarmed when he commenced to hit my lovely snake with the butt of his rifle. This upset me so much that the farmer had the snake gutted and I was given this wonderful trophy to take back to Fairbridge. Suffice to say my beloved trophy began to stink after a few days and I was ordered to remove it from the wall just above my bed – a rather sad day!

I do remember Auntie Jean and Uncle Ken having us for Christmas one year in their house in Salisbury.

Dad, accompanied by Hilda and Chris and John, came out to Southern Rhodesia in July 1952 but unfortunately for me, I was at a scout camp at Matopos. While Gwen and Sue saw Dad, I did not see him until 1 December 1952, when he met me off the train on Salisbury platform. I can recall him coming up to me and asking whether I was Peter Woodward, to which I replied, "Yes, Sir". While we were walking out of the station, he asked me what I intended to be when I left school and I told him that I wanted to be an engine driver, to which he replied, "Over my dead body!" Due to the discipline that I had been under for the preceding six years, it took me some time before I called him "Dad".



Peter with Owl at Fairbridge, late 1949



Ken Howell with Gwen, Peter and friend Gillian, Fairbridge, June 1949

The family rented a house on the corner of Jameson Avenue and Park Street in those early days while waiting for Dad's railway house to be completed but it was not long before the family came together as a family, all seven of us, at 8 Cedar Avenue, Lochinvar. I was so delighted when Pauline was born on 3 March 1953, which in my mind cemented us together as a family.

Unfortunately, in April 1954 Dad decided that it was time Gwen left home at the age of sixteen. She left to live at Lady Stanley's girls' hostel, which created a bit of space in the three-bedroomed railway house at Lochinvar. At that time, I shared a bedroom with John and Chris, while Susan and Pauline shared the second bedroom, leaving Hilda and Dad in the master

bedroom. This meant that we only spent 16 months together as a whole family in all the years of our lives!

My memories of those early days were happy ones but the birth of Grant in 1957 and his subsequent death five months later left a big hole in everyone's life and had a terrific adverse impact on Hilda, who had shown so much love to all of the children. At least in those days I could handle my two younger brothers, as they were a lot smaller than they are today, and I can happily recall the days when we wrestled on the carpet with big brother as the victor!

The times that I really enjoyed occurred when I was allowed to accompany Dad in his railway guard's van over weekends. I took great joy in helping Mum get Dad's 'scoff' box ready and having tea with condensed milk in the guard's van in the light of his paraffin lamp. I was also allowed to help Dad shunt when we stopped at sidings to off-load trucks and pick up others.

In 1953 Dad and I went with Fred Wentzel and his son to the Zambezi Valley on a fishing expedition. I can recall Dad telling me that Fred was the original big white hunter. The trip was more or less a disaster and Fred turned out to be just a railwayman – when we finally reached the big river we discovered all our worms were dead! To me, as a 13-year-old, the trip was a big adventure and even though we got lost in the bush and almost ran out of petrol, we finally made it back to Salisbury. We were scared out of our wits when we thought we heard a lion round the camp, which turned out to be an enormous baboon. We also had a ride in an original dugout on the Zambezi and I can strongly recommend to anyone NOT to follow our example! The roads in those days left much to be desired with 'strips' from Salisbury to Sinoia, and dirt thereafter. At a later stage Dad told me he had a five-pound note in his pocket, but he would not reveal it to Fred Wentzel as he felt that Fred had contributed nothing to the expedition. Boy! I nearly said something then, as the return journey consisted of the two Dads worrying about us reaching home, arguing about whose fault it was, and coasting down every hill.

That old Morris Oxford must have achieved the best fuel economy for a vehicle of its type at the time.

My favourite job at 8 Cedar Avenue was looking after the chickens. Dad started by bringing 100 day-old-chicks home that we used to keep near the stove at night to keep them warm. I could not get home quick enough from school to 'check on the chicks'. Watching them grow from cuddly little chicks to feathered chickens was exciting. We built a run in the garden for them to scratch around in. All the left-over vegetables were cooked over the stove and the chicken mash blended in. I then went and fed the chickens; a lot of them grew very tame, sitting on my knees as I fed them. The worst time was when they had reached an age of 6 weeks, when Dad rung their necks, and then we had to de-feather and dress them. I would then go around on the gardener's bicycle selling the chickens for half a crown a pound. The chickens were about 3 pounds in weight. At the same time, I sold vegetables from the garden. My take was 10% of what I sold. This process began again when Dad brought home another box of day-old-chicks.

I had another pet – Paddy – a Cairns terrier, which originally belonged to a chap across the road who was rarely in. When his dog became attached to us he gave Paddy to me. I had to ride 7 miles to Prince Edward School every day and Paddy would run alongside for that whole distance. At times I tried putting him on the crossbar to make the trip easier for him, but he always jumped down and ran alongside. During school Paddy would lie under my desk and was never a nuisance. I often wonder why no one complained about a schoolboy bringing his dog to school.



Paddy, c. 1955



Cycling, c. 1955

In those days Dad used to drive a 1934 Ford which was an 8-cylinder vehicle capable of a great speed – for those times anyway! Dad used to drive into the driveway at great speed, straight into the garage with about 10 inches clearance either side. One day he overdid it and hit the left-hand side of the column taking a big chunk of bricks out – the only damage to the car was a small dent – cars built in those days were comprised of very thick metal.

Accommodation at No 8 was rather limited for a family of eight and as we all grew, so the bedrooms got smaller. Gwen was the first to go and then I was moved to the veranda, which was roughly covered with gum poles and light board. At a later stage I had a caravan in the garden, which sat on concrete blocks.

My first holiday with Mum and Dad out of Southern Rhodesia was in late 1953 when we went to Durban. I was taken along to baby-sit Pauline! I know we stayed at the Lonsdale in West Street and had a great time but cannot recall why my other brothers and sisters did not come along and who looked after them in our absence.

At the end of 1956, I wrote my Cambridge school-leaving certificate. I disliked school, so I took up temporary employment with the Farmers' Co-op for three weeks pending a permanent job with the newly established Central Bank.

In 1958 all the family went on holiday together. Dad financed this holiday with his £750 winnings at the old Belvedere Race Course. Dad and I went ahead in the Vauxhall Velox. I slept in the car at Beitbridge, ready to get through the Border early in the morning. I was only allowed to drive the car a little of the way as Dad was far too nervous when I was behind the wheel. We spent the next night at Ladysmith and while Dad fell into an exhausted sleep I went out and saw a film on my own. The next day we reached Durban and met Mum, Sue, Chris, John and Pauline at the railway station. We all then squeezed into the car and went to Margate where we stayed at the Fairy Glen Hotel.

We all had a glorious holiday and the only mishap was when Mum asked me to fetch the iron from reception. As I plugged it into the wall I received an electric shock that sent me flying out of the room. I lived to tell the tale. While I was there I fell in love for the first time with the Hotel Manager's daughter whose name was Merle! With the encouragement of Dad, I stayed an extra night in order to attend the dance that evening while the rest of the family set off back to Salisbury in the motor vehicle. At least this created a bit of space in the fully packed car, but I really got it in the neck when I arrived back at work at 2.30 pm instead of 8.00 am. On top of this I had to pay for my airfare, which made a big hole in my salary that month.

The saddest day for the whole family occurred when Hilda passed away in November 1958. Obviously, this had an adverse effect on Dad who had had two wives (who knew each other very well – Hilda was initially a friend of Irene's sister Molly) for only two periods of nine years each. However, all of us pulled together and we were closer then more than any other time in our lives.

Looking back now I think that specific period was a happy time, despite Hilda not being with us, as we kept very close through the period of grief. We had many trips together to a swimming pool along the Beatrice Road. One day Chris almost drowned as when I looked for him he was floating face down in the water and I thought he was larking about until Dad shouted and I pulled him out – thank goodness we caught him in time!

It was a full two years before Dad took up with another woman and this lady (Fran Brockwell) had two children of her own and despite the fact that the two families tried to live together in a house in Belvedere, the union did not last.

The one thing I was crazy about when I was 14 or 15 was building model aeroplanes, a hobby which was financed by baby sitting every weekend. I used to try and find baby sitting jobs Friday, Saturday and Sunday evenings which paid about half a crown an hour. After a good weekend, I

received about 15 shillings and would go straight to the model shop after school and buy a kit for 14 shillings and 11 pence.

One day when cutting up a bit of balsa the knife slipped and I nearly cut off a finger on my left hand. Blood was pumping out of my hand when Dad rushed in; he took me to the Lochinvar clinic where I received a few stitches. This never deterred me as my love continued for a long time afterwards.

When I started work I was able to move onto the more expensive type of model, mainly control-line model-aeroplanes with diesel engines. My friend Dave and I would spend hours trying to get these engines going. You needed very strong fingers as the propeller had the habit of biting you back. Dad used to watch us fly and one day he asked if he could fly my latest plane. My first reaction was to say no, as it took time to learn but, in the end, I relented. Suffice to say Dad's flying career did not last long as he barely made one circuit with the plane going right up and then straight down burying itself in the ground. It cost him just over £5 to replace the plane and engine.

I joined the Central Bank (The Bank of Rhodesia and Nyasaland), which had taken over the responsibilities of the Currency Board, at the beginning of 1957, and spent 29 years there. In late 1960 a new recruit joined the bank to work in the department I worked in; it was love at first sight and we had our first date at the Bank's Christmas dinner. We married in September 1963. Sadly, Dad had some negative reaction to our wedding and did not speak to us for the first two years; this was overcome in time; Merle had a very serious talk with Dad in 1974 who realised how great his daughter-in-law was.

Our first daughter Gail was born prematurely in 1966, and with cerebral palsy. Michelle, born in 1967, was also premature and released to us 3 months after her birth. It was like having twins, but we thoroughly enjoyed seeing them grow up. Very sadly, in 1995, Gail passed away at the age of 29 – the saddest time of our lives.



Sue, Pauline, Joe, Chris, Peter's motorbike, Vincent hardboard caravan, and nipple-pink VW Beetle, c. 1960



Peter and Dad on holiday in Durban, c. 1953



Chris, Peter, Pauline, Sue and John on Margate beach, Natal 1958



Pauline in wig, Chris and Megan Molam, Chris and John, leaning against Joe's white Vauxhall Velox, 1965

When Rhodesia became the independent nation of Zimbabwe in 1980 many of us were in fear of our lives. But we did not want to disrupt the children's education so decided to stay and see how things progressed.

After 29 years of service, I left the central Bank at the end of 1985; I had tried very hard to work with a black Governor, but corruption was becoming extensive. I was to be promoted to General Manager (third in the hierarchy) but knew I would end up in prison if I stayed on, as I would very likely go public with all I knew about corruption among Government appointed officials. I then worked for Merchant Bankers MBCA until my 60th birthday; I was very happy to retire and leave a job which I had hated for over 14 years.

For the next few years I ran my own secretarial/finance business, with seven very carefully selected clients, as well as an investment portfolio for 83 clients. I also ran a security business with Michelle's husband, Mark, which was most successful until the foreign currency pool ran out.

We lived on a one-acre plot in the suburb of Greendale of Harare, the main house being used by Michelle and her family, while a new-built small cottage accommodated Merle and I. We had the privilege of seeing our grandchildren grow from birth.

Michelle, her husband and their three children subsequently emigrated to England in 2002. It was a very sad day to see them go. Not long after Merle and I left Zimbabwe, in 2003, to come back to the country of my birth, but with very little financial resource as the Zimbabwe dollar had fallen at an accelerated pace. This ended my sojourn in Southern Rhodesia/Rhodesia and then Zimbabwe, after being in that lovely country for over 54 years.



Peter and Merle's (née Sudbury) wedding, September 1963



Michelle and Gail, c. 1972, S. Rhodesia



Gwen, Sue and Peter, Hayes, c. 1945

Susan Mary Woodward, Born 8 June 1944



Susan in Trafalgar Square, London, 1950

I always thought that losing Mom when I was about 2¼ years old would not have affected me. However, after undergoing therapy in 2007 with an analyst, much has come to the surface. I can recall standing up in a bed, no more than three years old, crying for Mum. Nana Howell held and told me that she would love me just as my mother had. This she did with all her heart. All my memories are of being loved and pampered by her.



Ada Howell, c. 1947

Nana was worth her wait in gold. She worked hard for her husband, never grumbled, always helped people and kept her house spotless. They had a new house at 3, St Dunstan's Avenue, Acton (near St Dunstan's Church). Granny Howell, Phillip and Phyllis (great uncle and aunt) lived there as well during the war years, and their daughter Hilda (born 28 Nov 1921) also remembers being there. (Hilda told me later that she accidentally started a fire in the house when she moved a candle near a window

curtain. The fire brigade was called out and she remembers being scolded by a big fire officer wearing a big brass helmet.) Then they moved into a maisonette at 7 Cavendish Avenue, Ealing, while Granddad Howell was preparing to go down to Devon.

I used to get the entire sugar ration and go down to the local corner shop with Nana and buy a packet of Liquorice Allsorts. Then I would sit at the kitchen table and make a figure of the Allsorts man. Grandmother Howell used to walk me across a railway bridge to go to school. I think this must have been a pre-school. The only time I remember her getting very cross with me is when I dropped my cat Pip from the top floor of the maisonette to find out if a cat did have nine lives. I had learnt this from stories that she used to read me.



7 Cavendish Avenue, c. 2005

I had a beautiful doll's coach pram. A stairway, going up the outside of the building, provided access to the maisonette at Cavendish Avenue. I can remember Nana always to be scrubbing the steps. Nana would let me go down the stairs, as she cleaned them, and I'd push the doll's pram along the road to see my friend, who had a big doll's house, and we used to play for hours together.

Once I got a fish bone caught in my throat. Since then, I still do not enjoy fish as the flavour takes me back to the incident.

My enduring memory of Granddad Howell was when he played Bach on a baby grand piano. I had to stand next to the piano with my hands behind my back and listen to him play. I was not allowed to touch the piano. To this day I still love some of Bach's pieces. I don't think Granddad Howell spent a lot of time at Cavendish Avenue, and I have no bad memories of him.



Granddad Howell, c. 1945

Pip, the pet cat, was very special to me, and I cried when I left for Africa on the 26th October, 1950, not understanding why Nana was not coming and why I could not take Pip. I remember waving goodbye to Nana at Paddington Station. She was wearing a flat hat with a feather stuck in it and was crying. I was on my way to Southampton, to go to Southern Rhodesia via Cape Town. I wrote to Nana for many years. Sadly, Grandmother Howell passed away before I turned 18. I was extremely fortunate for having those few years with her.

My memories of the boat trip to Cape Town were terrifying. I have no good thoughts. The crossing of the equator was terrible. Everyone was screaming and falling in the pool, it frightened me. I recall clinging to someone's hand and wanting to be back with my Nana.

There were eight children in all, travelling with a Matron under the auspices of Fairbridge Trust. On arrival at Cape Town we stayed in the Shipping House before boarding the train for a journey that lasted 3 days and nights, travelling up into the centre of Africa, to Bulawayo in South Rhodesia. Wherever we stopped there would be Africans trying to sell us things. I finally arrived at the Rhodesia Fairbridge Memorial College (Induna, Bulawayo), with five others.

I can still see Gwen and Peter standing at Fairbridge School gates, waving at me when I arrived, as well as Peter showing me his bottom with the red welts from a caning. I had problems with bed wetting when I first got to Fairbridge. However, the Matron, who had a room at the top of our dormitory, said I could use her toilet at night. I had been scared to go out

to the toilets, which were not in the dormitory. I think they were down a dark passage.

Once, Peter and Gwen and I ran away from Fairbridge. I can remember hiding under a display case full of birds' eggs in the Bulawayo Museum.

When Joe and Hilda came through Bulawayo, I remember Dad looking at me and calling me his 'Blonde Bombshell'.

I only have a few vague memories of the house in Jameson Avenue, near the centre of Salisbury, where we stayed for a short while before going out to Lochinvar.

The memories of Lochinvar and the Christmases there were wonderful. I was given a doll the first Christmas. Hilda always gave us 10 shillings (now 50 new pence) to shop for presents for each other. Somehow, it seems we all managed to buy everyone in the family a little present. These were all wrapped up and placed under the tree. Me, Chris and John used to wake up so early. There was always a sock for each of us, full of little things – nuts, sweets and an orange. Such memories make me feel warm. I can still see Hilda and Dad laying in their double bed on a Sunday morning – and us being allowed to get into the bed with them.

The picnics at Mermaids Pool were the best. We used to get back home so tired and happy. Our dog Paddy was always with us. Most Friday nights found us listening to "Journey into Space" – we loved it. It was on BBC radio, broadcast on the World Service to the colonies. We listened to "Hancock's Half Hour" as well. I also recall Dad coming home and Mum sketching him in the car in the driveway. Then there was Sunday lunch, when Dad used to come home from the Lochinvar (Railway) Club slightly inebriated. Mom used to get a little upset as his portion of food would have been kept warm in the oven and got very dried out. He did not seem to worry.



Sue and Henry Jarvie, with swing on
mulberry tree at 8 Cedar Avenue,
c. 1960

My neighbourhood friends were John Potts and Henry Jarvie. There was the vacant piece of ground where we played with Henry's dog. We used to pinch fruit from the Afrikaans man over the road and hide in the dog's kennel whilst he swore just outside, "Where are those bloody kids", while his large dog lay in the kennel with us all and we tried not to laugh. These memories make me laugh.

Our very young brother, and son of Hilda, Grant died at the age of five months. I recall it very well. I spent a lot of time helping Mom; I used to wheel Grant around in the afternoons after School. He was always propped up because he could not breath properly if laid flat. Mom spent most nights awake caring for him, hence she needed to sleep in the afternoons.

This was all before dear Hilda died. What a loss! I looked after Hilda at home before she went into hospital. When Hilda was being put into the ambulance she told me to look after my brothers and sister. Dad went through a very bad time, as did everyone else. I can remember trying to cook but always felt Hilda was behind me, helping. Thank goodness Mum showed me how to sew as that helped me with all the mending I had to do with Chris', John's and Pauline's clothes! Dad made us get the most possible wear out of clothes. Poor old John was always last to wear the shorts, along with the patches. Thinking of John, I remember the time he gave me such a fright at the kitchen window. Oh yes, we had the skull for scaring the poor old domestics.

Throughout the earlier part of my life I always heard Dad saying, "If a job's worth doing, do it properly." When he used to give me housekeeping money, after Mom died, he would always expect me to

give him all the cash slips plus the exact change. This was one of the many things that taught me integrity and honesty, and that everything should balance. One time he sat on the bed crying; it must have been shortly after Hilda died. He said he was blessed with wonderful women in his life. This showed me that men can cry and show emotions – it was not a sign of weakness. He came across very hard at times, however his childhood was not an easy one; being left with us first four, at very young ages, and then having it happen again with six of us, must have been very hard. There was no time to get mushy and over-emotional but to get on with life!

However, despite these sad experiences, we all grew up, and made our way in life. Dad always tried to keep us as a family and it could not have been easy for him. I had a wonderful relationship with him until the day he died – and I still miss him and his guidance, and love and understanding through some hard times. He was so proud of us all and often spoke to me of all of his children. It was always positive and while at time some of us had problems understanding him, he was a special dad to me. I remember those terrible stews he used to make with all the leftovers – what a mess. Yet, we were never malnourished and turned out to be a healthy bunch. We all made it in life and for this we can thank Dad, our two wonderful Mums, and each other.

When Mom (Hilda) died in 1958 I was fourteen years old and at a critical time in my senior school education. Staying off school and looking after Mom for three weeks before she died, and the after effects, did have an adverse effect on my studies. My academics results were poor and I left school at fifteen and half. I was a plump teenage girl and had no self-esteem or confidence. Dad put me through a short three-week course on National Cash Accounting machines. This, coupled with my bookkeeping results, which were good, enabled me to go into a banking career. I applied myself and sat internal banking examinations, lost weight, gained confidence and was in the right place at the right time. The male employees were doing service in the terrorist war and women were left

to take the man's place. Women were not considered capable in the 1960s.

I was very independent and I put this down to the fact that my childhood experience, of being sent to Africa, on my own, at the tender age of six years, made me so. Further, Dad instilled in me that one had to work hard, be honest and have integrity. I recall when he gave me money for groceries I always had to give him receipts and the exact change, everything had to balance, hence I did very well in banking. At the end of my career I was made head of a division "Retail Policy and Review". Dad, being Dad, was extremely proud of my achievements considering my teenage years.



Sergio and Sue's wedding, August 1968

I was blessed with an amazing man, Sergio, my Italian husband. We married in 1968, Aurelia was born in 1971, with Luisa following in 1972. Dad knew both of my girls and once again basked in the fact that they both went on to further studies getting a degree and diploma. Sergio and I finally left Zimbabwe in 2008 to reside in New Zealand, where our daughter and family had settled earlier. Luisa settled in the UK some years earlier.

Christopher John Woodward, Born 1 December 1945



Minet Drive, Hayes

I never knew my natural mother, who died about 9 months after my birth. I ended up being looked after by foster parents (arranged privately by my father) who came to live in our house in 19 Minet Drive, Hayes. My elder brother Peter and eldest sister Gwendoline went to Spurgeons Orphanage in Reigate and then later to Bulawayo in Rhodesia, to the Fairbridge home, intended mainly for orphaned children. My other sister Susan stayed with Nanny Howell but eventually went out to Bulawayo. My father meanwhile went to Nigeria to work on the Railways.

I don't have many memories of my time in Minet Drive. There was a great sofa in the living room and I remember hiding behind it, whether as part of a game or to escape notice, I don't know. That sofa also featured in another event, as I remember being smacked by, I think, Dad for jumping up and down on it. I also remember the piece of common land [which

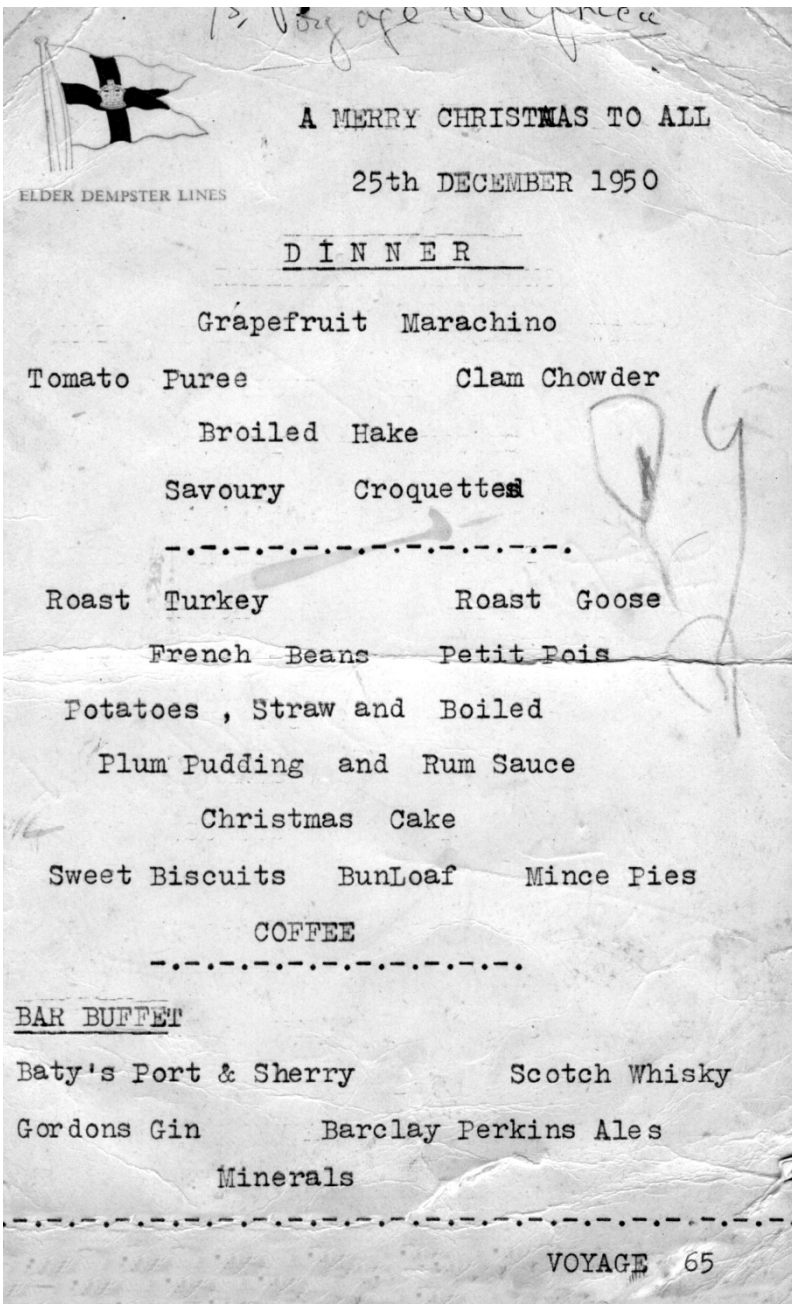
appeared to be] opposite the house, which I know no longer exists. I also remember the fears I had in taking baths, which inhibited me from learning to swim until a fairly late age.

I don't remember anything about the foster parents, but I presume that I did not suffer from them, as I felt I was a fairly stable and level-headed person. However, my father relates that when he returned to the UK in 1949 – I think I was about 3 to 4 years old – he found me to be very thin. Personally speaking, I think that this was due to an overly large head for my body – I always regarded my head as being too big. At the dinner table, Dad was astonished to see my foster mother giving her daughter my pudding, without any complaint on my part. She had apparently finished her desert, wanted some more, and I freely gave her mine, without the foster parents batting an eyelid (maybe I didn't fancy the desert!). Dad was incensed – whether it was really justified or not I'll never know. Anyway, he turned them out of the house eventually. He told me that he had taken me to a café for a meal and said that I ate two full-grown meals.

I cannot help in retrospect thinking that post WWII rationing was still in place and may well have contributed to some of the above. Sue believes that I had suffered from whooping cough while in foster care and that may have affected my general health and appearance at the time too.

Enugu, Nigeria (late 1950 to 1952)

Early in 1949 my father married again, to Hilda Barnes, who was my natural mother's best friend, and Aunt Molly's. Although she already had a son, John (born in 1947), I understand that my father was his father as well. Hilda, John and I resided for a short spell at Minet Drive after Dad and Hilda's marriage, while Dad went back to Nigeria by air. In 1950, John and I travelled by sea on the SS Calumet via Port Harcourt to Enugu, Nigeria with Hilda, someone who I was to come to accept totally as my own mother. (On the voyage, Hilda penned a light poem about the officers and crew of the SS Calumet).



Christmas Menu on the SS Calumet

" S. S. CALUMET "

She's a trim little ship, bound for Africa
With Cargo, and passengers few
A Merchant Vessel from England,
With a fine bunch of Officers and Crew.

Her Crew, a grand lot of fellows,
Work with skill and zest,
And the Bosun and Mate do their best to create,
A Happy Home - going West.

The 1st Mate, a sturdy officer,
A guide to the Bosun and Crew
Takes a stand, and with a wave of wand
Makes the old ship like new.

The Chief Engineer is a comic,
Though his work is a serious task,
For without his hand, we would never reach land
We must do that, - Need you ask ?.

The Chief Steward and his merry men,
Know all they " MENU " to get,
An occasional rum,
For some that are dumb,
Gives one no chance to regret.

The Purser, a kindly Gentleman,
Always ready with a smile and a nod,
And the Purser's Clekk, Is he smart ?.
Rather like a Hollywood "Bod".

And not forgetting Sparks our wireless Off
Whose job is valuable, - Agreed ?.
Who sent all the messages at Xmas ?,
Why - Sparks did indeed.

But the Captain of the Ship, There's none so fine
We only know he's loved by all his men
If you haven't met him yet, Master of s.s. Calumet,
The nicest ship of Elder Dempster Line.

J.W.W.

Hilda's poem

When we arrived at Port Harcourt – Lagos' harbour, I recollect throwing out coins to African boys who paddled around the ship in their log dugout canoes and dived into the water to retrieve them. Why such memories in particular, I don't quite know.



We travelled onwards to Enugu by train, on the Eastern railway line that had been established after the 1909 discovery of coal at Enugu during the Colonial years.

The railway line started in Port Harcourt in 1913 and reached Enugu in 1916, ("The Eastern Nigerian Railway: The Years Of Decline, 1967-1990", by Ujam A Ujam, a report submitted for MA in History, University of Nigeria).

Our days in Enugu appeared to be happy ones. But Dad was often away.

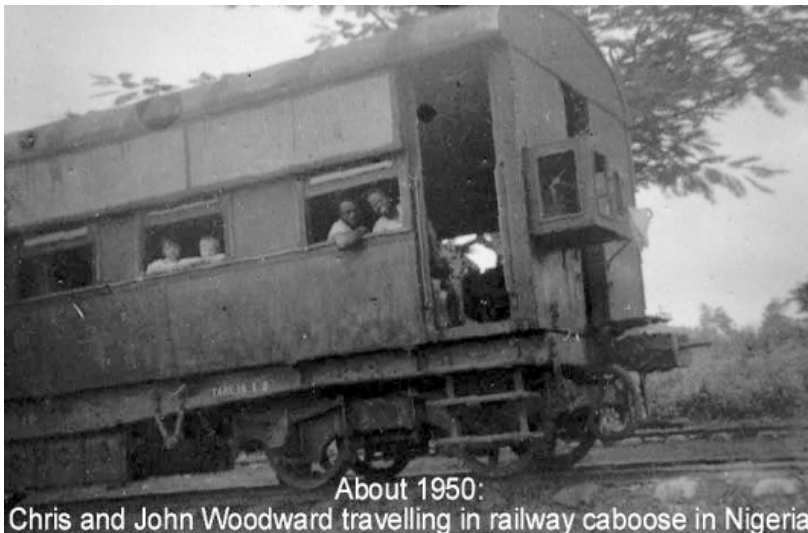
I have an impression of the street on which we lived, but little else about our location. I do have distinct memories of the house we lived in, a two-storey brick structure with an outside flight of stairs rising to the living area on the upper storey. The ground floor consisted of a few storage rooms but mainly of an array of brick pillars. John and I frequently pedalled through this maze on our tricycles. The house was apparently designed to cope with floods. The upper storey consisted of an outer veranda, which was entirely netted to bar the entry of insects, particularly mosquitoes – these were obviously not entirely satisfactory as there were cotton nets over the beds as well. There was a large mango tree near the house; the branches were close enough to the house to almost allow us to gather the fruit from the upper storey.

I also remember that we ate a lot of curry dishes out on the veranda, 'colonial' style – i.e. with lots of small dishes containing things such as sliced bananas, ground coconut, sliced tomatoes, all dressings for the main curry dish. We had native servants; Abu an Ibu, was a constant companion to us two boys. I can also recall our gardener who used to sit

at the bottom of the flight of stairs, armed with a machete, acting as our baby sitter whilst our parents were out. He had the habit of talking to the plants – as children we thought him a bit peculiar, but he was to be trusted. I also remember occasional trips with Dad on the trains.

I don't remember ever having other children of my age to play with in Nigeria. We did not attend any school but received some tuition from a private tutor, who Dad had arranged to instruct us in our home. From photographs of the time, we seemed to live in white shorts and white cloth caps and nothing else.

If my memory serves me correctly, Dad seemed to be able to arrange for a caboose to be attached to the train, in effect a caravan on railway wheels, in which we would have occasional trips on the train.



Salisbury, Southern Rhodesia, 1952

After about 18 months, we flew back to England from Nigeria but were soon on our way again by sea to Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe). Dad had again left the UK in order to work on the railways in Rhodesia. We arrived at Cape Town and travelled from there to Salisbury (now Harare) by train

– a journey of about 2 weeks sailing and 3 days travelling by train. I don't remember much, if anything, about these trips in particular, as they were eclipsed by subsequent trips which in one way or another left a more lasting impression on me. Yet I recollect that we did see Gwen and Sue at Bulawayo railway station for a short spell before travelling on. It seems they travelled up to Salisbury at a later date. Peter was away on a scout camping trip at the time, so we missed seeing him.

Lochinvar

We initially took up residence in single men's quarters in the Rhodesian Railways housing estate, situated in Lochinvar, about seven miles from the centre of Salisbury. I was happy, although some things appeared strange – the netted doors and windows, the cemented floors dyed red and finished to a high polish, and the large number of tall gum trees that regularly shed their bark. Their aroma was distinctive and added to the almost mysterious atmosphere of those wooded areas. The quarters were within an easy walk of the Lochinvar Railway Club, the social centre for the railway community. I remember that those single men's quarters were not far (about 500 yards) from the Railways Club house, which became the centre of social life for the community of railwaymen, and what families they had, in Lochinvar. We lived in the temporary accommodation for about two months.

I attended the Primary School in Lochinvar until the end of 1957. Apparently, Miss Holmes, the arithmetic teacher was impressed by my abilities here but not so my English, as far as I was concerned.

Jameson Avenue

For a very short period the family lived in a house in Jameson Avenue, west and within a mile of Salisbury centre. Gwen, Peter and Sue remember being here, and I assume that this location must have intervened between single quarters and our move to Cedar Avenue. Suddenly, the family expanded from two to five children. Of course, for Gwen, Peter and Sue it must have been rather strange after being separated so long from Dad and gaining a new mother they came to love

– as we all did. It must have been difficult for Hilda to have to bring up such a large family.

Cedar Avenue

The Woodward family was the first to occupy 8 Cedar Avenue in Lochinvar, the suburb was being built up progressively from east to west. The house was a three-bedroom single-story white-emulsioned cement-clad building with tiled roof. A rectangular veranda occupied one corner with access from the yard on the short side, and three large arched openings on the long side. Dad eventually filled those openings, as well as the main access, with wooden shutters and a door so as to provide another bedroom. I think this was to accommodate Peter, who previously used a home-made wooden (hard-board) caravan built on an I-section steel chassis. I remember trying to sleep in that caravan but found it too noisy when it rained. That fourth bedroom also temporarily accommodated Gwen and Tony after their marriage in 1959 – for a young married couple to occupy a room neighbouring and accessed from the lounge was somewhat accommodating of Dad – and the rest of us; but I’m not sure how well it suited Gwen and Tony.

Lochinvar was probably the least attractive suburb for white immigrants yet a good economic deal for railwaymen, and despite their relatively lower incomes – by white standards – most were able to afford to employ one or two African servants, whose incomes were considerably lower. We typically had a house servant, who cleaned the house and washed and ironed, and a garden ‘boy’ who did the donkey work in the yard, including car cleaning. Our servants, as well as house-servant’s wife and one or two young children, were housed in the simple accommodation unit attached to the garage. Employees also provided their servants with basic food. I got the impression that Hilda was uncomfortable with having servants.

The African’s diet consisted largely of sadza – the staple diet of the indigenous Zimbabwean, made from coarsely ground mealie-meal (maize) cooked with water and salt into a very thick porridge, and meat and

gravy. Meat was always relatively cheap, and the cheapest bits would be acquired for the African staff. The sadza would be formed into balls by the hands of the diners and dipped into the gravy before being eaten. Occasionally we children would also partake – I can remember my own visits down to the African ‘quarters’, as they were known, and the occasional tasting.

To use the word garden would be somewhat of a misnomer – usually it was called the yard as it certainly could not be called a garden by English standards. I cannot remember there being much of, if any, lawn. If there was one, the root system lay dominantly above ground and grew by laying a few strands where needed. Part of our yard was often occupied by rows of mealies (maize plants), the staple food of the area. I would love peeling fresh mealie cobs, with their soft fronds. The yard also had its population of ant holes and anthills, although these were never allowed to grow much above the ground. Some of the ant holes could be quite wide (up to an inch in diameter). We will never forget one of Hilda’s attempts to subdue the ants. She decided to flood their holes and drown them. On the day in question she poked the end of a hosepipe down one hole that was close to the house and left it running for hours. Dad came home later that day and drove past the house towards the garage, but never actually reached it as, much to his surprise, the ground suddenly subsided under the weight of the car as he passed over the ant hole.

The other way to treat the ant holes was pouring petrol down them and setting light to the fuel, but usually the scale of these underground habitats was too extensive to do permanent damage to the ant colonies.

We had a mulberry tree in the back garden, on the fruit of which we used to gorge ourselves annually – it was also fitted out with a swing, which might not have improved the yield any. Paw-paw trees, which would weep a white sap, also grew in the back yard. They were quick growing. I think we all grew a little tired of their fruit. There were also half a dozen guava trees, which provided interesting material for some of our games. I was a cautious eater of those guavas, as it was not uncommon to find a

worm or two inside. There was always a surfeit – their fallen fruit sprinkled the ground. They made wonderful and relatively painless projectiles that would be occasionally found flying towards the road. Our targets were the street sellers who peddled their products from their bicycles, which were equipped with carriers above front and back wheels. Where we got the gall to do this I cannot recall. In retrospect it seems a most inappropriate activity. It was never racially motivated but just rather plain poor decision making as to what constituted childish fun.

Boyhood life in Lochinvar

The more I reflect on my early family life in Rhodesia, the more I am sure that I must have been a frightful child and the Woodward's could not exactly have created the correct impressions.

John and I played together more than we did with others – we used to have our fights as well, neither one of us necessarily coming out the conqueror. There were other railwaymen's children with whom we became friends. There was Henry Jarvie, a particular friend of John's, who lived on the opposite corner to our house; John Potts who lived behind us – his father was killed in a head-on train collision during our time there; the Fernandes family who lived next door to the Potts. The latter were Fernando (a son), Manuela, a very friendly mother and a father who seemed to look like Caesar Romeo the actor and drove a black Citroen, typical of the type used by French police in the 1950s.

The Hammonds lived a few streets away; we became acquainted with them after having a school fight with them. They included Arthur and Butch. Arthur subsequently became a pupil of Prince Edward School, but he and I lost touch, only seeing him again at the school's centenary celebrations in 1998. I remember sitting in young mango trees in the Hammond's garden eating unripe fruit dosed with salt. There was also another friend who lived between our house and the Hammonds, whose mother baked wonderful yeasty bread. I can recall sitting with him on the roof of his house biting into the wonderful stuff. Towards the end of our

period in Lochinvar, I remember a family moving in next door – I became rather attracted to their daughter Henrietta – I think we actually exchanged brief kisses. She used to bake cakes for me.

John and I were quite creative in our boyhood endeavours, although I think most of the inspiration came from the Hammonds. Making boats from corrugated iron sheets – often used to roof properties in Africa – was one. We would bend the iron around an upright piece of wood (probably from a crate) to form the bow, nailing the malleable metal to it. We would use a wider piece of wood to form the stern. We would gouge tar out of the metalled roads that had been softened by the sun, to leak-proof the vessel. Then it would be launched into one of the narrow streams that we would find around the area – they could have been large ditches. We also swam in rain-filled quarries. Farms typically built concrete water reservoirs (about 20 to 30 feet in diameter, and 6 or more feet high) and we would often use these as well for recreational purposes.

I think that John and I were probably a bit wild as youngsters; it seemed to be the general nature of the neighbourhood. I am never quite sure how Mum Hilda kept out of our way – I don't think she was in any way negligent, but just very tolerant. We used to spend most of our time running around in bare feet, and they were probably better for it. One memorable evening, a few of the Woodward children and neighbourhood friends were drifting along the streets. We settled on the activity of lofting heavy rocks up into the air to reach the lamp in a nearby overhead street lamp. I was most shocked to be the one to succeed – the lamp shattered with a great noise followed by the very hasty scatter of the 'gang' to their various homes.

John and I used to make bows from tree branches, and arrows from the thick stems of elephant grass. We used chicken feathers as flights and pins as arrow heads, carefully positioned them using some of Hilda's coloured cotton threads. On one occasion when we were playing cowboys and Indians, John and I came hurtling around a corner of the house in opposite directions. John fired off an arrow which embedded

itself in my forehead, not very deeply, yet I shudder to think what the outcome might have been had his arrow's flight had been a little lower.

Neighbouring the house was a piece of common land, probably about three to four acres in size, largely flat and constantly covered by tall elephant grass – often above our youthful heights. It was a favourite play area – and we used to scamper and chase each other through the grass forming windy avenues in a maze-like fashion. We would form secret hideaways among the tall grass and share emerging thoughts and experiences. I often marvel that we never encountered a snake in that area, but I guess half a dozen scampering pre-teen youngsters was enough for any would-be predators.

John and I used to make catapults from Y-shaped tree-branch joints, using car-tyre inner-tubes for the elasticised sections, a bit of leather in which the missile would be placed and thinner threads of inner-tube to secure the elasticised sections to the upper sections of the wooden Y. I believe that we learnt this piece of handicraft from the Africans, which they used for more practical purposes than we did. These catapults were potentially lethal, although I only recall one occasion when they were used in purposeful 'battle' between rival gangs of 'white' and 'black' young boys in a piece of waste land somewhere between the railway line and the Lochinvar Club. We never got close enough for any hand-to-hand stuff, and never close enough to cause, real injury to each other. One boy had a sling and was very adept at using it. It seems remarkable to me that no serious injury resulted from these escapades. It certainly did nothing to cement white and black relations.

The African children were often ingenious. Old car and truck tires would provide the source material for improvised sandals. African children would often be found walking the streets and paths with model cars fashioned totally from bent fence wire. They would typically be about a foot long, and 6" wide and tall. Their front wheels would be mounted on an axle to which was attached, via a yard of rigid wire, a 'remote' steering wheel used by the 'driver'. I was always quite envious – our Dinky toys

were no match. However, we would enjoy forming road systems in the loose surface of the yard along which we 'drove' our toy vehicles.

The children in our neighbourhood often constructed soapboxes from scavenged wood and pram wheels, their front axles steered through attached ropes. One or two would provide more carefully fashioned ones with curve metal sheet used to fashion bodies.

It was not uncommon to find John and me clambering on to the house's roof and also the corrugated asbestos roof of the open garage, located in the back of the yard. I remember an occasion when John managed to bite into his own tongue as he jumped down from the garage roof, learning how rich a source of blood the tongue could be. We also used to mount home-made stilts from the house roof, usually made from timber from packing cases, which added from three to five feet to one's height. Occasionally the more confident would strap the stilts to their legs, but most of us just prepared ourselves for an easy jump off should we lose control.

The Woodward and neighbourhood children often played a large-scale outdoor version of hide-and-seek, called Decko. The assigned 'seeker', on finding a 'hider', would require that person to line up and follow behind him while he continued to walk around looking for more hiders. Each time a hider was found that person would form up behind the extending, but moving, line of other found hiders. However, if an unfound hider was seen to beckon, by the last person walking in the line, then s/he could run off and hide again, all this during the period that the seeker was facing and moving forward and counting up to a defined number, usually 20, before looking behind to check whether his found hiders were still behind him. The game relied on the integrity of the found hiders to run away and hide again only when genuinely beckoned, and on the seeker not looking behind while counting up to 20. The game would be over once no hider remained unfound. A single game could last an hour or more, with hiders being found but constantly being beckoned away. It certainly taught the finder patience and persistence.

Scavenging

As youngsters we used to visit the Coca Cola factory on the other side of the railway line. I used to love watching the mechanisms for filling and capping the bottles of drink, which included lemonade, ginger beer as well as green-coloured cream soda (green to distinguish it from lemonade). We used to get lots of free samples, and I recall that the Coca Cola seemed to have quite a unique and fresh flavour so shortly after being bottled. We also used to go nearer to Salisbury and visit the tobacco auction floors – they covered a wide area but were subsequently replaced by even larger ones. The auctioneers used to move rapidly along the lines of baled tobacco leaves, rambling away in a language completely beyond the comprehension of we young ones. Our main reason for visiting was to take advantage of the free drinks and snacks that would be provided for the buyers. I think it quite remarkable how our presence was tolerated – we made not a few visits.

Rhodesia was a major producer and exporter of Virginia flue-cured tobacco – the second largest exporter worldwide after the US. Cigarettes were cheap and came in packets of 50, 30 and 8. When we were young we used to be able to get packets of 8 for 2d, usually buying them from the small shack shops that served the Africans. We used to smoke them in our havens located in common lands.

Boxing

I joined a local boxing club mainly to impress my father, although in my heart of hearts I hated fighting and would generally seek to avoid physical conflict. I did it to try to demonstrate that I wasn't scared, although I was. Dad used to talk about some personal experiences as a boxer, but I don't recall at what period that occurred in his life. John seemed to have the fighting instinct. According to Dad, I had the skill but no fight, while John was the other way round. Dad may have been trying to be diplomatic about my attempts – although he was not renowned for diplomacy. I dropped the sport when I was beaten rather severely by Butch, the younger brother of my friend, Arthur Hammond.

Lochinvar primary school

The primary school was made up of a series of, what appeared to be, pre-fabricated units. We often found large bull-frogs in the playing fields, and on one occasion a large banded cobra, which the African ground staff soon dispatched with a large stick. I remember some of the girls in the school – Helen comes to mind – but I never seemed to have the courage to befriend any.



Chris, with tie, with group of
Lochinvar children and parents,
c. 1952

Vumba Heights

Sue, John and I spent a school term at Vumba Heights in the Eastern Highlands (while at Junior School). The area was very different from the savannah lands that dominated Southern Rhodesia with their Msasa trees (and their strange leaves that budded in a reddish hue and turned green as they grew further) and scattered rocky outcrops. The vegetation was thicker, the trees more majestic. We used to get sweet fruit from what we called tree tomatoes (the fruit was tomato like in texture but darker, sweet and more elongated). I can also remember the tuck shop. The main building seemed to be set on a level dug out from a sloping hill. As a consequence, an earth bank was located near the building and we boys had a wonderful time creating 'cliff-side' roads in the bank for our Dinky cars.

Weekend outings

We did, though, have some enjoyable Sundays, travelling to favourite picnic spots (Lake Mcllwaine, Mermaids Pool, Skyline Hotel, Zuvanika on the Hunyani river).

Mermaids Pool

This was one of family's Sunday haunts. It was a natural pool set against the side of a great slab of rock at an angle of about 45 degrees. The slab was at least 30 feet wide and 80 feet high. At the top, a local farmer had erected a dam which released sufficient water to create a super water slide. Enterprising persons used to come hurtling down the slope on top of inflated car or tractor tyres with such momentum as to careen right across to the other side of the pool. Many a swimming costume was worn out by the less adventurous, such as I, choosing a lower starting point and just sliding down on our rear-ends. There was also a 'foofy' slide – where the term came from I don't know – consisting of a pulley wheel with handles running on a sloping cable that crossed the pool from a height of about 20 feet on one side to about three on the other (these would be known as zip wires in the present day). One had to climb a tower to grab onto the pulley and launch across the pool, ending up on the opposite side hitting the water, or dropping off half way. We also used flippers, mask and snorkel. Tall trees offered welcome shade from the sun and wonderful places for picnicking around the pool, with its irregular shape and micro bays providing opportunities for exploring.

Skyline Hotel, Zuvanyika

The Skyline Hotel was another popular family Sunday haunt. I nearly drowned in the swimming pool at the age of about seven – the shallow end was rather deep, or I was rather short. I used to sit at a corner of the pool and jump over to the other side of the corner and grab the poolside rail. I missed on one occasion and found myself standing upright in the water with the surface above my head wondering what I should do. I don't remember being frightened, rather more uncertain as to what I should do next. Brother Peter fortunately observed the incident, rushed over and grabbed me by the hair and yanked me out. I had a friend who actually drowned in same pool, though not when I was there. Some careless boys had accidentally pushed him in. Running past the hotel was a fairly shallow but fast-moving river through which we used to wade, on

one occasion with bloody consequences when I stepped on to a broken bottle thrown in no doubt by a casual drinker visiting.

Salisbury Public Park

This also reminds me of Sunday (or Saturday) visits to the Salisbury public park – the gardens there were marvellous with their diverse flower smells mingled with the smell of fresh water that always seemed to come from the mini version of the Zambezi river and Victoria Falls. It was at the park that we also used to hear a brass band playing, often the police band. This was sometimes led by ‘uncle’ Ken Barnfield. The Barnfields were family friends, having come to Southern Rhodesia from England on the same sea voyage as us, back in 1952.

Holidays and Free time

Radio and TV

I can remember Dad buying a radiogram. Dad used to play Harry Belafonte and I memorised the words of one song in particular: “Down the way where the nights were gay, and the sun shines daily on the mountain top; I took a trip on a sailing ship and when I reached Jamaica I made a stop. Oh, I’m sad to say I am on my way, I won’t be back for many a day. My heart is down, my head is turning around, I had to leave a little girl in Kinsgton town.” And I can equally never forget Belafonte’s ‘Hole in the Bucket’. Hilda’s favourite was a long-playing vinyl record of Rose Marie, with Howard Keel and Ann Blyth.

Television came relatively late to Rhodesia – it was probably mid to late 1950s. We used to listen to the radio as a family, especially to the Goons, but also ‘Journey into Space’, and ‘Take it from Here’ with Jimmy Edwards. In the programme, Jimmy was the father of Ethel, who’s boyfriend was Ron. When television did arrive, I can recall watching it through someone’s window as we did not have one at the beginning.

Christmas

Despite being midsummer, we celebrated Christmas as close as possible to British customs back in the UK. I can remember one year's Christmas tree ending up in the front garden, taking root and flourishing. It was still in the front garden of 8 Cedar Avenue when I visited there with Jenny and our children in the early 1990s.

Holidays away from home

Holidays away from home were infrequent, and more memorable as a consequence, especially when they entailed three-day train trips down to Margate or Port Elizabeth in South Africa. We were able to travel first-class free due to Dad's employment on the railways. We would either have two-person or four-person compartments and I loved the moments when the attendants would come and prepare the bunk beds for the night. Going to sleep seemed so easy, as the train rocked and clicked with regular frequency over the rail joints, never travelling at great speed as the narrowness of the gauge would not allow it.

I particularly remember the holiday down in Margate in the Fairy Glen Hotel, situated next to a lagoon. This was the holiday trip on which Peter took a shine for the owner's daughter. We journeyed back home by car in one day – a trip of over 700 miles. We were exhausted, particularly Dad. However, on arriving and entering the house we encountered a very fine, white dust covering furniture and floors. Sister Gwen had kindly entered the house while we were away and burnt off some flea-repellent blocks – fleas were a constant problem – but had not been in to clear away the mess before we returned. Boy, did this set Dad off.

On occasions, the Woodward's also holidayed in the Wankie game reserve, on the western side of Southern Rhodesia, and less frequently in the Gorongosa game reserve in Mozambique. The elephants were always the most spectacular and fearsome of creatures for me. On one trip with our father, contrary to all standard advice given to visitors, he stepped out of the car and walked off the track in order to get a closer shot of a herd of elephants with his standard-8 cine camera. I was in the back with

John and quite petrified (Sue also recalls being terrified, sitting in the car with John and I, when the elephant chased the it). I was never quite sure whether Dad was just fearless or just put on a front in these situations. The elephants in Gorongosa always seemed a lot larger than those in Wankie and so were more to be feared by me. Sadly, that wonderful game reserve disappeared after the guerrilla wars that the country experienced in the 1970s.

I also remember a holiday in Beira, Mozambique when we camped on the beach. Beira beaches were unprotected by shark nets, but I was never quite sure whether this was a consequence of economy or the fact that sharks did not travel this far north along the east African coast. Shark nets were always used down on the Natal coast in South Africa, but despite their presence it was not unknown for the occasional shark to break through the barrier and take an unfortunate bather. Although those seas were wonderful for body surfing I could never quite relax when out in those waters.

Pets

The Woodwards had a family dog, Paddy, a white Highland terrier. I think it was mainly Peter's pet. He was always with us children, and one of his memorable tricks was standing over a rock and dragging it backwards with his front feet, making tracks in the inch or so of soft surface in the yard, that we used to capitalise on as roads for our Dinky cars.

I also kept rabbits and guinea pigs for a while, in a home-made hutch made from planks and chicken wire. I shall never forget one morning coming out of the house to find the hutch destroyed and all of residents dead or missing – it appeared some neighbourhood dogs had taken a fancy to them. I was absolutely heart broken.

From time to time Dad used to raise chickens from their chick stage – I cannot recall him regularly trying to hatch them although this did happen on occasions. So, we usually had a plentiful supply of eggs, and chicken meat. We all used to participate in plucking slaughtered chickens, but

only Dad was the executioner, usually doing it by wringing their necks – always a gruesome thing to witness it seemed to me, but someone had to do the dirty work. I can recall one occasion when a batch of recently purchased young chicks had a horrid end when the liquid-fuel burner that was providing them with warmth fell over while placed in the garage. I particular remember how upset Hilda was. The rapid-reaction response to finding their box burning was buckets of water, which probably added to their demise. I remember distinctly the mixed aroma of burnt feathers and water. I can still recall the smell.

Playing cards and other games

The children used to play cards, particularly Canasta, a good deal – there was no television to draw us away. I had the impression that Peter introduced us to the game. It was certainly an absorbing and relatively involved game for youngsters but definitely kept us from engaging in other potentially riskier pursuits. Monopoly was also played fairly frequently, using the London version, so we were kept well aware of famous roads like Mayfair, the Strand, Pall Mall and key railway stations.

Kite-making was also a pastime the boys enjoyed. I usually used brown paper, sometimes layers of newspaper, for covering a two-dimensional diamond-shaped frame usually made from slices of bamboo tied with string at the crossover point and also strung around the four tips to provide a sort of anchor to the paper over which it was folded and glued, often with flour paste. Rags provided the necessary tail. The yard was marked off by a fence made from concrete posts between which was strung three lines of fairly heavy-gauge wire. When the wind was good enough we used to get the kite up and tie it off on one of the fence posts and leave it there.

Weather

Those years in Rhodesia were largely made up of the dual seasons of winter and summer. The climate at 5,000 feet was ideal.

Winters were almost entirely cloudless with bright blue skies and occasional light frosts, but temperatures rarely dropped below 50°F (10°C).

October was transition month – when moisture and heat levels rose. It used to be known as suicide month – whether the level of suicides were any different I cannot say, but the relative oppressiveness may have tempted a few. Actually, compared to the Zambezi river valley to the north and the low veldt of the sugar estates in the southeast, Salisbury residents had it pretty good.

Summers were wonderful for their very bearable conditions – temperatures would regularly be in the 80s, and sometimes in the 90s (27°C to 32°C) but humidity was generally low, and heat could generally be escaped by taking to the shade. Cumulo-nimbus clouds would be frequent visitors yet only occasionally dense enough to threaten rain. Rains would normally be most welcome, and usually accompanied by the most refreshing of aromas. I can particularly remember one sun-downer evening, viewing a distant and lightly cloud-populated sky. The scene was made most spectacular by lightning strikes magically confined within each cloud. Monkey weddings (simultaneous rain and sunshine) were another memorable experience when brilliant sunrays would break through gathering clouds from which light raindrops were falling.

Early light summer rains would sometimes be accompanied by flocks of large flying ants emerging from their holes in the ground, seeking new sites for future colonies. Once descended, they would quickly shed their wings to become 'meat' for the Africans. I could never be tempted to try one myself. I also remember the occasional mini-plagues of locusts and caterpillars that used to consume anything green they encountered. Ant-lions were a fascination and we would often try to tempt them to grab the ends of thin stalks of grass that we poked down the bottom of their amazingly uniform conical funnels in the sandy soil.

Lochinvar Club

The family used to visit the Club fairly often. It hosted dances and parties. Dad used to be more regular, with the enticing bar, snooker hall, darts and various card games tempting those with a gambling instinct. I can remember packets of crisps – the ones in which salt was provided in a small separate blue-paper wrapper – and bottles of iced Coke.

Dad also liked the horses. Salisbury used to host horse racing events about every second Saturday, but the Tattersall's Club provided opportunities for placing money on horse-racing events in foreign lands. Dad was a bit of a punter and eventually took a share of a bookmaker's business (with Mr Howard). I was a fairly good mathematician and consequently was offered the opportunity to 'clerk' for Dad when he was running the bookmaker's stand at the Saturday races. £5 a day for this back in the early 1960's was very good money.

Dad and Hilda

Dad and Hilda used to have heated differences at times. I remember Hilda walking out of the house with a packed suitcase on one occasion. Dad and I went looking for her a little later.

I do not remember much of Dad in the home. When at home I remember him more often being in the yard, servicing and fixing cars. I must admit to learning a lot from him – dealing with electrics, setting tappets, changing shoe pads, and occasionally reseating valves in cylinder heads.

When I was old enough Dad also used to take me on a occasional railway working trip. Most often these used to be day-return trips, e.g., out to Sinoia and back, or to Marandellas and back, and occasionally overnight returns to QueQue on the way to Bulawayo in the south, or Rusape, on the way to Umtali in the east. The overnight trips always seemed special. At our overnight spot we would stay in the isolated accommodation units provided by the railways. I can remember the condensed milk in particular, which travelled well. The trains were always goods trains.

Since the rail network was largely single tracked, trains had to pass each other at sidings. The guard, which my father was, was responsible for picking up the large two-foot, or thereabouts, diameter passing tokens. A train could not enter a single-track section without having the token for that section in its possession. It would then be left at the 'exit' siding for a train coming in the opposite direction. The guard's truck at the end of the train had overhanging windows so the guard could easily and safely look forward or backward. I used to love taking up one of the positions.

The trains were often Garret steam locomotives, with their large coal tenders behind them and their sloping water tenders in front. Sometimes there would be two units at the front. When the diesel locomotives started to be used I was also saddened but nevertheless fascinated by them – I remember being shown around one when we were on a trip – there was space under the locomotives outer cover to walk either side of the diesel power unit. They seemed immaculately clean after the sooty condition of the steam locomotives.

Dad and John

John, unfortunately, always seemed to be on Dad's bad list, much to my sorrow, and this was the situation for many years after. Deep down Dad was a loving person but his exterior was hard, probably due to his upbringing and increasing cynicism. He had very few reliable friends and was always finding his friendships destroyed through being too trusting – usually involving money,

Family friends

The Woodwards would often visit with the Howells. Uncle Ken was an industrious type. I remember going to visit their home out near Mazoe. Ken built his own house there among the Msasa trees. It seemed to be made of corrugated asbestos. There was a separate small rondavel (round house) which I think was used for cooking. I also remember the pit-based toilets. They also had a water reservoir of about 15 feet

diameter (with water about 6 or more feet deep) in which we used to swim at times with our cousins (Basil and Kevin) – I was not always that keen as it never seemed that clean to me (retrospectively, I hope and assume that this water was for other than domestic purposes). It was during one visit to the Howell's that I remember going out shooting with an air rifle, taking aim at a bird on a branch and much to my surprise and horror managing to hit and kill it. I never wanted to shoot anything again after that. I also recall Dad somehow being provoked, challenged into walking all of the way back from the Howells to our home. This took him at least half a day so I guess the distance was about 10 miles.

We also used to see a lot of the Barnfield family. I particularly fancied the daughter ("Tessa"). I can remember that 'uncle' Ken Barnfield was a policeman who used to play a tuba (or at least a brass instrument) in the police band.

Hilda's death, November 1958

It's odd what one thinks at times, particularly when tragedy is looming. I can remember Hilda having to go to hospital but was never sure what was wrong with her. It was a shock to us all that she died, due I believe to a blood poisoning condition (she came out in black blisters). I am sure that Dad told us that she was seriously ill, maybe that she might die. However, my strongest memory is the extremely strange thought that passed through my mind at the time – I think I actually wished she would die.

Now I had no reason for this as I always had a good loving relationship with her. I do not know whether the idea was a random one, which somehow lingered for more than a moment; whether it was somehow suggested by something someone said or whether it was provoked by the idea of wondering what it would be like for her to be dead. I am still at a loss as to its origin, but I have never forgotten my thought or the fact that Hilda did pass away a matter of days thereafter. I did not think that I had caused it, either. I put it down to casual careless, usually unexpressed,

thoughts that somehow came to haunt me, from time to time, in the years that followed.

It was not until I was diagnosed with prostate cancer in 2011 that I was given a possible explanation. During the year of radiation treatment, I was also encouraged to consult a therapist, not that I felt I needed probing mentally. However, to my surprise, the matter of Hilda's death and my strange childhood thought was explained. Apparently, although only an infant when Irene died, I would have felt the loss of my mother. Then, when in later years I was coming to terms with the idea that Hilda might die, I "rejected" her first before she "rejected" me. I had acquired a "rejection" complex. These therapists certainly come up with some interesting notions, but in all honesty, it really helped me realise I was not evil but reacting to the turn of events in a sort of self-preservation sense.

Religion

There was a time in my youth when I attended church regularly, due almost entirely to the influence of Hilda. Around the age of twelve, when I was being prepared for 'confirmation' in the Anglican Church, some doubt arose as whether I had ever been christened as an infant.

Whatever had occurred in the past, I was christened, or re-christened, on 21 July 1957 and confirmed subsequently on July 27. I think this all took place in Lochinvar.

After Hilda died in 1958 church attendance dropped away. However, occasionally thereafter I went with Dad to a Baptist church, but as far as I can remember this was only a within a year or two of Hilda's death.

Prince Edward High School

Secondary school, Prince Edward High School, was located in Salisbury. I started there at the beginning of 1958, generally cycling there from wherever we lived; a distance of about 6 miles from our Lochinvar home. Along with many boys of my age we became quite adept at carrying out maintenance work on our bicycles, including replacing the free-wheel by a

highly geared fixed 12-sprocket cog in order to be able to cycle faster. Fortunately, the road was fairly flat between Lochinvar and school as negotiating hills of any substance would have been extremely difficult with that high gearing. Of course, using a variable-gear facility would have solved the problem but such gear was beyond my budget. Part of the route to school was alongside the railway line that used to go through Lochinvar, on the way to Bulawayo in the south.

When Hilda died in the first year of secondary school, Dad felt that I should attend as a boarder. I was devastated. I became a boarder of Rhodes House. Although I was not a first-year pupil I suffered the indignity of having to take a bed in the dormitory of first-year pupils as well as work as a fag alongside the first years. This arrangement was the prime cause of my hatred of being a boarder and, thankfully, within the year I was back as a day scholar.

Pranks at school

We used ink dipping pens those days at school – the desks were equipped with inkwells, and our pens were wooden shafts with a metal holder at one end for replaceable metal nibs. Those nibs made useful points for darts – we used to break off the useful end (with the central split down which the ink would run to the point) leaving two points at either side of where the nib used to be. We would then create a crack in the other end of the nib so as to slide in a rough flight made by folding a square piece of paper into a four-section flight. Around most rooms and corridors were notice boards usually made with a fairly soft fabricated wood, suitable for easy use of drawing pins. Our arrows would easily embed themselves in these boards. I must also admit to the practice of using glass tubing for pellet guns, the ammunition usually being chewed up blotting paper formed into a suitably-sized pellet that could be forced along the tube and at the intended target after a healthy puff. Blotting paper pieces were also used, after soaking in ink, as more crude projectiles hurled at their targets from the bent over end of a foot-long wooden rule. I remember managing to splatter the back of a fellow pupil's shirt with one

'bullet' but never did it again as I was caught by the History teacher, Mr Carter, who gave me a caning.

Trip to Fort Victoria

My academic performance at school was not exceptional – in neither a good or bad sense. For reasons I cannot quite recall I decided to apply for a full-time job after finishing my General School Certificate at the end of 1961.

The job was with an iron foundry/fabricator (Sissels) located in Fort Victoria in the south east section of Southern Rhodesia. I travelled down by train with Dad to start the job. After a night in a local hotel we appeared before a manager (I guess this was the Personnel Manager) with the intention that I start work the following day. I was getting most anxious about this break from home (then located in Adamas Court). I might also have been put off by the industrial nature of the site. Anyway, after leaving the building Dad and I got talking. I think he had sensed my concerns and I let spill my worries and we ended up travelling back to Salisbury. In that conversation I committed to working hard back at school. Jack Gaylard – headmaster at Prince Edward – agreed to take me back.

I never let Dad down, as I often got up at 5am in the morning to do school work and by the time I had finished Higher School Certificate I was top in Applied Mathematics, a close second to the school pure-mathematics brain box (Trevor Derry, who I have since re-met a few times, the latest being 2017), doing well in Physics and not too badly in Chemistry. I was fortunate enough to gain a full-fees scholarship from the Anglo-American Corporation for university back in the UK. I had enough qualifications to gain entry to Cambridge but chose to go to Imperial College of Science and Technology, reckoned to have the best engineering faculty in the country.

I was most inclined to take up a Maths degree, but on the advice of an educational psychologist was directed towards engineering. My love of

Maths was largely instilled in me by a tremendous Maths master, Pete Bantock, who I subsequently met again in Johannesburg when visiting there on a business trip in the late 1980s. We also had a tremendous geography teacher in my General School Certificate years – he was a big guy by the name of Cox, but a most effective teacher. I was sad to learn subsequently, when attending the school's 100th anniversary (in 1998), that he had been killed by a burglar the previous year.

Other homes

Belvedere

After Lochinvar, we lived for a short while in the suburb of Belvedere, which was much closer to our secondary schools in Salisbury. I think Frannie Brockwell, Dad's lady friend, lived with us there along with her arrogant son Raymond and precocious daughter. I also remember a kind neighbourhood girl, visually but not by name unfortunately – a pretty regular failing on my part – to whose house we used to go to swim. I may have known her through my best friend Keith Tattersall. I think we vacated this house once Dad's relationship with Frannie ended, when we moved to 8 Adamas Court in Avondale – by that time I think only Susan, Pauline and I were living at home, John having joined the British South Africa Police as a cadet.

Adamas Court

Adamas Court was great – my first experience of a flat (apartment), and in a great area. I was much closer to school friends and we frequently visited a café in the main street equipped with a football table. These had rows of opposing plastic footballers on metal rods that we used to flick with sharp wrist movements as the white ball approached. This was my last home before moving up to Nkana-Kitwe in the Copperbelt region of Northern Rhodesia – I worked there for about 7/8 months as a scholarship winner before leaving to attend university in London. It was while we were living here that Megan came into Dad's life.

Montagu Court

Dad moved in to Megan's flat at Montagu Court after Dad suffered a second heart attack in 1965 – Dad was told by the doctor that he shouldn't be left alone, so eventually Megan said that they'd better get married although neither ever intended to. Dad actually suffered his first heart attack when travelling by sea to the UK with Susan and Pauline in 1964 – aged 48. He thought that he had a severe case of indigestion, and actually went to the gym the following day. Dad and Megan married in 1970 after she was able to retire from the civil service at 50 and get a pension. Megan was then re-employed as a part timer.

Penpal

Sometime in my years in Rhodesia, I started writing to cousin Mary. I cannot recall why and how this started, and unfortunately if I kept any correspondence, I would have left it along with whatever personal possessions I had (like my treasured stamp collection) back in Rhodesia. What I remember of these letters was more a matter of the joy in knowing there was someone who I could share a young teenager's emerging feelings as well as local facts and events, and also grow attached to someone who I had never seen before, but someone who was taking an interest in me.

The attachment remains strong to the present day as I look back from the early 21st century.

Life in England

Having graduated and marrying Jenny in 1967, I entered into information technology, working mostly as an IT management consultant (I continue to dabble in this, even in my current years). After about eight years of marriage, Jenny took the plunge into motherhood, and took to it



Chris and Jenny's wedding, July 1967

magnificently, giving birth to six children between 1975 and 1986, one very unfortunately dying at full term, just before delivery. We lived the majority of our time in the one house in Tunbridge Wells (for over 41 years), a place where all our children were raised – a stable and loving home, we hoped, in a town I grew to love. For the last 12 years I have served as an elected Councillor and expect to do so until the electorate get fed up with me, or I cease to ‘move’.

I never returned to reside in Rhodesia/Zimbabwe, but have visited quite often, either with my own family (lastly in 1991, when our youngest was about five), or on the back of business trips to South Africa. Whenever I re-visited, a strong desire to stay would emerge. I always hoped to have a holiday/retirement home there in my later years. There is something about that land and its people that I loved – it’s in my blood, even though I only resided there for about 12, very formative, years. However, Zimbabwe government policies and actions have led the country away from its prosperous years, the years when I was there, into corrupt and very much leaner ones, particularly for the average indigenous person. How very very sad.

When Dad was alive we’d talk a good deal, both on his visits to the UK and ours to Harare, particularly when I travelled alone. There was no doubting his pride and love for all of his children, but there were one or two occasions when he seemed to be setting off one against another. I would encourage him to be a unifying force; I was sensitive, from my young years, to occasions when praise was directed to one child, while others appeared to be denied it. I will always remember, in the week after Dad died, when all of his children spent many hours reminiscing; we recorded those memories and Paula went on to transcribe them, which ultimately led to this document.

I have had many close encounters, particularly over the last 10 years, with ex colleagues from Prince Edward High School, Harare – a great school (I will always remember the straw-boater hats we used on special occasions). We seem to be united by our shared experience from our

school years, as well as just living during those great Rhodesian years. So many of them have done wonderful things, to mention a few: Martin, a GP, and his wife who started a commune some 25 years ago, on an old spread-out hotel site in Marandera, Zimbabwe, in order to provide a home for non-indigenous long-term residents of the land with limited resources in a post-independent nation; Trevor, the brain box, who studied in Witwatersrand University, and never left that establishment, becoming a professor of nuclear physics – he still has an office on the campus and continues to play a part there; John, who came back to the UK at the same time as I, to attend Sandhurst military college but, with Ian Smith's declaration of independence in 1965, took up an offer to serve in a Gurkha regiment, retiring as Brigadier – he continues to play a role in Gurkha-associated charitable concerns. I continue to be united to my loving, best school friend from those days, Keith, and have visited him and his family in Australia on occasions, while he and his wife have visited the UK more often. I particularly remember us meeting up in Harare in 1998 to commemorate our High School's centenary. I have also sought out the mathematics teacher of my latter years at Prince Edward, Pete Bantock, now in his late 80s and living near Johannesburg in South Africa; it was he who inspired my best endeavours in mathematics, and I will never forget his role in making the subject one that I loved; he was also the school's rugby coach, a sport in which I failed to excel. A great leader.

John Malcolm Woodward, Born 17 Sep 1947

My first memories were when I travelled to Nigeria with Mum and Chris in 1950. Some of them are the Africans jumping for pennies in the sea at Lagos, riding our tricycles at our house in Enugu, and eating yams (large tubular vegetable with a mushy pulpy inside – the staple diet of the Ibu) in the House servant's (Abu) house.

I also remember staying in our first temporary home in Jameson Avenue, Salisbury, where I played cards with Chris and Sue.

Childhood

8 Cedar Avenue was a paradise after single quarters. Henry Jarvie lived on the opposite corner, with his dog Copper, and became a close friend of mine. We were caught smoking by his Dad, who made Henry smoke a whole packet of 50 – he never smoked again. Sadly, he was later killed in the war with insurgents during the 1970s.

As children, we used to try and construct underground houses by digging holes into the ground and then using corrugated iron and such like to cover over the holes.

We grew paw-paws and guavas – I will not touch the latter anymore – as well as mangoes, which I still eat. The family kept chickens in a chicken run. I would collect the eggs. We'd move the run to fresh ground and then use the vacated (fertilised) ground to grow vegetables. I used to sell some of our vegetables to neighbours, on Mum's say so, and I would hand her the proceeds of any sales made.

Sue and Chris and I used to listen to the Goon show while having tea, toast and jam. We also went to film shows at the Lochinvar Club; it cost a shilling and that included a coke and packet of crisps. The first television programme I can remember watching at home was Huckleberry Hound,

in black and white, Unfortunately, I could not watch as much as I would have liked as I had to go back to boarding school.

We had a variety of family outings that I recall, including trips to Zuvanyika, where Chris nearly drowned, and barbeque picnics at Mermaids Pool, sometimes with the Howells (Ken, Jean, Basil, Kevin), with its rock and 'foofy' slides. We also used to visit Ken and Marion Barnfield a lot, which was always great fun. Mum was a great friend of Marion – as well as the Howells.

We moved to 8 Mull Road, Belvedere, with the Brockwell family (Fran, son Ray and daughter Linda) and this often resulted in arguments between us children. Ray came with Chris and I when we went down to Beira for a holiday, while Dad (and Fran) went by car.

We then moved to Adamas Court. I can remember my final year of school and Chris waking me up early in the morning to study, which I was never good at. Sue started work about this time and then went off to England, while Peter was living somewhere else alone. Chris also went off to university in England, and I joined the police, just leaving Pauline at home. Dad met Megan around the time I went off to Chinhoyi (with the police) – I returned later at the time that Dad had his first heart attack.

Along with Peter, Sue and Chris, we used to make soapboxes, as well as drive them.

Chris and I raced our Dinky cars on "on the ramp and the race track". We used to climb the corrugated asbestos roof over the garage and servants' quarters and race our cars off the roof. Once I jumped off the roof managing to bite into my tongue, filling my mouth with blood – Henry as well as Chris might have been with me.

Chris used to make model ships from plastic, one being the Santa Maria, Christopher Columbus' ship. He and I also used to make aeroplane models from balsa wood kits that would be powered elastic bands. Peter used to make more elaborate model planes including gliders as well as



John and Susan and their soapbox, c. 1960

ones powered by engines that were flown in a circle on the end of control lines passing through one of the wings – Peter standing at the circle of the flight circle. Dad tried to fly one of Peter's control-line planes and wrote it off. Peter also kept pet snakes from time to time – Mum got a terrible fright when she opened the drawer in which he had placed them.

The happiest time I can remember was the holiday in Natal – at the Fairy Glen Hotel in Margate. We all remember Peter getting a shock from the iron he was using on one occasion when pressing a shirt. The hotel had a dammed-off stream that led to the sea that provided a pond big enough for swimming – it was also home to an iguana (or two).

Money was at times tight for the family. I remember being bought a pair of new shoes that I was to wear at school, but I had to carry them to

school and only put them on just before entering the school, so as to minimise wear of the soles.

Dad used to be Chris's and my barber. He had a bit of a heavy touch with those hand clippers (see, for example, Gwen and Tony's wedding photo earlier in the book), so Chris and I learned how to cut each other's hair. I actually went on to cut hair at boarding school with an old pair of clippers Dad gave me. This subsidised my pocket money, which was the least one was allowed to give a boarder. I upgraded my clippers to electric ones and cut hair when I went on to police training camp – a very lucrative little business.

My brother Grant was born shortly after my ninth birthday. I used to push him in the pram. Sadly, he died before he was three months old. About two years later Mum also died. I didn't believe it when I was first told and did not really come to terms with her death till about two weeks later, when Dad told me that she was never coming back. A month later that Christmas, I received a present from mum – a real bow and arrow set.



John with bow over the shoulder, c. 1959

I often used to play cowboys and Indians with Chris and once shot him in the head with an “arrow” and thought I’d killed him! It was a great fright to me and I cried the loudest.

Sue, Chris and I spent a school term attending Vumba Heights, situated in the Eastern Highlands. I can remember the tree tomatoes, the stinging nettles and walks through the forest, as well as the ‘roads’ cut into the side of an earth mound along which we would push our Dinky cars. Sue had a fight in the pit (*Sue recalls that this was a hole, dug out or natural, in the front grounds of the Children’s home*), because either Chris or I had been bullied by a hulking Amazon, and Sue won.

Chris and I had a camping holiday in East London. We won the prize for the neatest tent, I do not know how we managed that! Pineapple farms were everywhere and the fruit plentiful and cheap at 2d a pineapple. We played cricket on the beach, as well as ‘Paddocks’ – played with a pick axe handle, a tennis ball and only two wickets.

Boyhood mischief and fun

The young boys in Lochinvar went around in gangs, armed with catapults and divided by nationalities – Portuguese, Afrikaans, and British – and would fight each other occasionally.

The Hammond boys were our friends. We used to get together and make canoes using corrugated iron, and scrape tar off the road to patch over the nail holes, and then sail them at Warren Hills.

Among more prankish activities, my pal Henry and I found grease that we had been discarded on the side of the railways by engineers servicing the steam engines. We smeared it on the railway lines and waited for a slow-



Pauline and dog Paddy watch, as Sue helps keep John attached to Chris, on Peter’s shoulders, c. 1958

moving train to come along to watch and see the wheels of the engine spin. Dad apparently learned about this from a friend who had seen us – he was furious!

We would also engage in roof ‘rattling’, on the way home from boxing – we’d throw stones on to neighbours’ houses (presumably not those of friends) and they’d rattle against the roofs as they rolled down. I also tried scrumping mangoes from a neighbour’s yard but got punished with a hiding by Dad.

Chris and I once managed to give Sue a real scare when she was washing up in the kitchen one evening. We came to the outside of the window overlooking the basin where she was working and suddenly pressed our faces against it. She got such a fright she dropped and broke some of the dishes. Dad applied the normal punishment for this. Chris and I also made Sue angry on another occasion when she called for us to come to eat dinner and we ran away shouting, “Thundering across the prairie”, rudely picking fun at her slightly large size.

Other scrapes and misdemeanours included becoming unstuck with Dad when I swung on and broke off a branch of a young tree Dad had been growing. I ran away because I realised I was in big trouble. I also got into trouble after bragging to boys at Lochinvar School that my Dad was heavyweight champion of England.

I even managed even to get whacked by mum – the only time I ever remember her being really angry. Mum had asked me to take a ‘tickey’ (a 3d piece) back to a neighbour, Peggy Palterman, for whom I and Henry had done a favour. We did some shopping for her at the Southerton stores. But I decided to buy an ice-cream instead and lied to mum as to what I had done.

A curious memory - One New Year, Chris and I went to visit the house of a Scotsman, and when I tried to enter the house first, I was stopped - I didn’t have dark hair! So, Chris had to enter first.



John and Marzia's wedding, S. Rhodesia, December 1969

Dad, family and friends

I think I disappointed Dad by not applying myself more at school and by being a bit hare-brained.

Dad brought up six children on his own and to do that he used to fix watches, service cars, do books/accounts, punt professionally, and clerk for bookies. He may have been a hard man, but he wasn't hard hearted. I gave Dad a lot of heartache as a youngster, probably because I was a bit wayward, but got to know Dad very well just before I left the Police, after being a superintendent at 30 years, and we came together. Marzia and Dad became very close and he enjoyed Marzia's dinners and lunches. I only have one bad memory and that is at Paignton, in England, when I and family turned up unexpectedly.

When Dad bought me a pair of soccer boots at a charity soccer match (they belonged to Peter Tobin – a radio broadcaster) I was over the moon; I used the boots for school rugby matches when I was 13.

My good memories of Dad occurred when Dad was proud of me: at the Police boxing championship, the Police pass-out parade when I came top of my squad, when I was honoured guest of the Commissioner, when I was promoted to Superintendent and a number of other times not important enough to mention.

Sometimes Dad and I had long chats. I admit I must have really upset him when I found a photo of myself as a baby with the name John Malcolm Barnes written on the back. I asked dad if he was my real father. It hurt Dad, but he explained his relationship with mum and Cyril Barnes (Hilda's former husband) and what happened after Irene passed away. There is no doubt I am my father's son.

Dad and I spent a great deal of time together. He used to come to Marzia and my house for a swim regularly, and Megan, Dad, Marzia and I would often play bridge together. When Dad became really ill and the clamps holding his valves together came adrift, he was in serious trouble. Sue

and Marzia created a ruckus. Together, we visited the specialist and Dad was flown to Mill Park Hospital in Johannesburg. When we went down shortly after and visited Dad, we spoke to the specialist there, who said that Dad was a very lucky man to be alive and had a constitution of a bull elephant. He eventually pulled through and lived many years after this. It was at that time that I realised what a big gap would be created in my life if Dad went.

Dad used to talk a lot about his children:

Gwen did cause him a few headaches (as I did) but he was proud of what she did and her strong will. He was very proud of his first grandson (Ricky), but he may not have always have shown it. His relationship with Tony was fairly good.

He was extremely proud of Peter and his achievement in passing his banker's exam (equivalent of a degree). He used to brag much about his children behind his kids backs. He was distraught over Gail (stemming from Gail's disabilities).

Sue possessed a special place in Dad's heart, probably because she looked after him after mum died. Dad had an excellent relationship with her husband Sergio.

To say that Chris was Dad's favourite is not fair, Chris did the right thing at the right time and became the scholar that Dad wanted to be by applying himself. Chris also seemed to understand Dad better than I did. Understandably so, Dad was proud of him.

I also remember Chris learning to drive in an old Ford truck. Peter had motorbikes later and I can remember when Peter got his hand caught in the chain of one bike.

Pauline's physical likeness to mum (Hilda) captivated Dad.

The Paltermans were good friends of the Woodwards and lived opposite us on the corner. They were Uncle Les, Auntie Peggy (my godmother),

Dawn (Sue's age), Reginald (Reg, a year younger than me and was still living in Zimbabwe in 2008 where we saw each other), and Gordon (born the same time as Pauline). Peggy and Hilda were bosom buddies, and Les and Dad used to have a few drinks together. When Hilda passed away the Paltermans were very good to the Woodwards and we used to go out to their farm near Charles Prince airport and return with a load of vegetables.

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John unexpectedly and quietly passed away in 2016, just before his 69th birthday – heart failure was believed to be the cause (he had experienced low blood pressure for many years; a pace-maker had been suggested but he never had that fitted).

John never left Rhodesia/Zimbabwe. According to his wife Marzia, he could not stand the idea of living in a country that experienced two or more days of continuous rain. He and Marzia had four sons in the years between 1970 to 1983; very sadly their youngest, Kirk, at the age of 22, died at the scene of a motor accident in the arms of John, who had rushed to the scene after being informed, by Kirk himself. Marzia and son Roger (and his wife) continue to live in Zimbabwe. Sons Craig and Bruce are currently happily settled with their families in Suffolk and Scotland, respectively.

John loved his family and his golf, which he regularly played at Wingate Golf Club with good friends. Family was always important to him, both immediate and extended. He was a 'renowned' shower singer (he was also 'into' Harry Belafonte's "Jamaica Farewell", Chris' most remembered song of the early years), but his Italian opera renditions were another thing, embracing many a newly invented word. He tried to pass on his singing practices to his sons in their young years at bath time. He was also an early riser (a characteristic common to his siblings and Joe), spending many early hours entertained by Sudoku puzzles.

John excelled in the Police service, leaving in 1982 as their youngest Chief Superintendent not long after the country's independence, triggered by being asked to join the ruling political party. He responded to a job advert for an ex-policeman by a small security firm that had started about ten years earlier, but took a stake in the company and joined as a partner. He helped that company to grow from a few hundred to many thousands of security personnel, offering a wide range of security services. He retained an interest in the business right up to the time of his death.



John at the BSAP 'Passing out' with Joe, Megan, Merle and Sue, c. 1965

Extracts from Chris's eulogy at John's funeral service:

"John and I were inseparable in the formative years that we spent mostly in the railway suburb of LochInvar. We were out in the sun for most of those days, getting up to all sorts of mischief. I am never quite sure who was the ring leader of our escapades. Since John became an upholder of

the law, a policeman, I can only assume it was me; but I do have some doubts. We spent so much time together it is hard to separate who did what – our memories were so tied together – we were almost one.

“John was caring. Especially after he shot me in the head with an arrow from a home-made bow. ... John was brave and selfless. He would always come to my defence if I was getting in an argument or fight. ... He was also creative – soap boxes with recycled pram wheels; boats from corrugated tin and soft tar from the roads; kites made from brown paper, rags for tails which would sometimes fly unaided in the right conditions – tied to a fence post while we grabbed a quick bite.

“What amazing years those were; much more now as I reflect on John’s passing. What precious years. And many of those memories are recorded for our posterities.”



John and Chris, Hayes, c. 1949



Gwen, Pauline, Peter and Paddy, c. 1955

**Pauline (Paula) Jane Woodward,
Born 3 March 1953**



Hilda and Pauline, 1955

I don't remember much before Mum (Hilda) died except for these few incidents:

- Mum had been doing some ironing but then got talking to another lady on the kitchen doorstep. I took the opportunity to try ironing my dolls clothes, but I dropped the iron on my arm. I screamed, and mum came running in, grabbed some butter from the fridge and stuck it on my arm. I still have a scar.
- Dad was cross with me for some reason and went to raise his hand, but mum just lifted me up, ran next door into the neighbour's house, locked the door and called out of the window, "You are not laying a finger on this girl, and I am not coming home until you have calmed down."
- I had my tricycle stolen. I was so upset that mum cried along with me.
- I remember mum combing baby brother Grant's hair. He had so much on top and she used to twirl it around her finger making a little sausage curl. I can still picture Grant, his little face always in my memory.



Hilda and Pauline on the veranda at
8 Cedar Avenue, 1953

I don't remember Grant dying – just remembering him not being with the family any more. Dad came home one day saying that mum was in hospital and I just accepted that and didn't ask any questions. One day I was playing a game outside the lounge window sitting on the ground. Dad was inside with some people and he didn't know I was just outside. These people said something that included the phrase

"you and your wife" – obviously they were relative strangers and I will never forget these next words. "I'm sorry but I lost my wife three weeks ago," Dad said. I knew what it meant and started screaming, and ran into the house, into Mum and Dad's bedroom and just screamed and

screamed and screamed. Why hadn't anyone told me that my mum had gone forever?

After Mum's death I started school at Lochinvar. On my first day, I came into the kitchen dressed in my new school uniform – it must have been early January 1959. Peter was there and he laughed at me, picked me up and sat me on top of the fridge with pride. I just loved my big brother. I remember then saying, "When I grow up can I marry you?"

I had one term at Lochinvar (local to our home), in KG1, or kindergarten, the first year of school, then went for one term to the Vumba, away in the Eastern Highlands of Rhodesia. I was then sent to Routledge, in Harare, as a boarder. I hated boarding school. The only good times were when Dad came and took me out on a Sunday – every Sunday I used to sit on the steps and wait and hope that he would come. I didn't even enjoy the holidays because I never knew who would look after me – it would be whomever Dad could find to do the job. I don't think there was ever the same person twice and I don't remember the name of one person who looked after me.

During the long Christmas school holidays every year I used to go down to Simonstown near Capetown with the Childrens Seaside Holiday Society. I did enjoy those trips even though I wished to have my family with me.

I remember being taken to Elvis Presley films with my older brothers and sisters. Also, getting my pillowcase at the end of the bed at Christmas, containing games, oranges and some sweets. My main present always seemed to be a new dress and a new doll.

When I was about eight years old a lot of things changed. Gwen, my oldest sister got married and I was bridesmaid, and we moved from Lochinvar to Avondale, a much nicer area of Salisbury. Dad had a room, Sue, my older sister, and I shared a room and the boys had a room. I always remember Chris studying, even if it meant by candlelight – he



Hilda and Pauline on an African beach, 1954

seemed to just spend all his time studying. I used to get up to a bit of mischief with other children who lived in and around the flats at Avondale.

Every Saturday Dad went to the races and told everyone else to look after me. I took that as a time for being bossed around by all and sundry. I often took to my bedroom and climbed out of the window and “ran away”. Sometimes it was only around the corner and I wasn’t even missed, but once I went all the way back to Lochinvar and turned up on Gwen’s doorstep. I used to like going to stay with Gwen as she treated me like a person and not like a pest.

When I was eleven there were a lot more changes. Peter got married, and I was bridesmaid again. Dad met this lady called Megan, who lived at Montague Heights. These were apartments located in Montague Street in Salisbury. One day she invited us to have dinner with her. It was a lovely dinner with a special trifle. I thought she was a lovely lady and I still treasure the recipe of that trifle now. In fact, it became known as “Paula’s trifle”. Megan visited us at Adamas Court with her son Chris.

In June 1964, Dad, Sue and I took off down to Cape Town where we caught the “The Cape Town Castle” for Southampton, England. I remember that trip so vividly. Sue and I shared a cabin with two other ladies. Dad shared a cabin down the way from us with some other men. I think they were the cheap cabins but that didn’t make a difference as that trip was so exciting, such fun. Dad was very ill during that trip and spent most of the time in bed – we were later to find out that that this was his first heart attack. Sue was twenty and having her fun leaving me to do what I liked. I made the most of everything I could during the day and night time. I remember crossing the equator, and all the fun that surrounded it, and seeing the film “The Great Escape” with Steve McQueen and falling in love with him!

On arrival in Southampton I was in this big outbuilding, like a hanger or warehouse where the suitcases had to be picked up. Whilst we were there Dad told me to stay with the cases, and Sue and he went over to

this big crowd of people – all his family. I felt abandoned again. I went in a car with Mary and Les Butcher who had not been married long. I was going to stay with Mary's mother, Aunty Connie.

Dad loved Aunty Connie very much; she was his favourite sister by far. Aunty Connie and Uncle George seemed very old but very kind. They had this small bungalow and I was shown my room, which was very nice – my own room. I can't remember what I did wrong, but it must have been something bad because Aunty Connie sent me to my room. I escaped out of the window and went off down the road, found a park and stayed there until I was found. I think I put the wind up Aunty Connie and Uncle George because they asked Dad to find somewhere else for me to stay, as they didn't think they could manage me.

So, I was then taken to Uncle Ron and Aunty Norma in Bracknell, where I stayed for a year until June 1965. Uncle Ron and Aunty Norma had one small son called Andrew and they looked after me very well. Dad stayed in England for just a few weeks and then went back to Rhodesia. Sue stayed in England the same time I did, but in Bayswater, London in a large flat with five other girls (and eventually Chris).

While I was at Ron and Norma's, I started at a local primary school, just to finish off my primary education. It was only a few weeks and unfortunately everybody had just done their eleven+ tests to find out if they were going to Grammar school or Secondary Modern. I was too late, so I was told I would have to go to the local Secondary Modern – Borough Green.

Chris came over to University later in 1964 and I used to look forward to the occasional meetings with him and Sue. I remember going to stay in Sue's flat at Christmas and seeing snow for the first time on Boxing Day. We all went mad!

When I went back to Uncle Ron and Aunty Norma I remember Norma was pregnant again and, for some reason, I wanted to go home to Rhodesia. I talked two girls from school into coming with me. We planned our trip

very well. Slowly we managed to pinch items of food for our journey and store them away. The day we left we dressed in as many layers of clothing as we could, as it was the easiest way of getting out with our clothes. We left all our books behind and filled our bag up with food and clothing. We all told our parents/guardians that we would be going to each other's house that evening, to give us more time.

Instead of going to school we met at the railway station and boarded the train. We got to Southampton, found the ship but there was no way of getting on board until the next day. We found some flats with underground sheds and climbed on top of these to make beds for the night. On going to eat a tin of baked beans we realised that we'd forgotten to bring a tin opener. I said that I would go and ask at one of the flats. I went to a flat and said we had just moved in, my mother couldn't find her tin opener – and could we borrow one. Unfortunately, or fortunately, it was the home of a policeman who got very suspicious and took me inside and soon established the truth. We were taken to the police station and kept there until Uncle Ron came to pick us up. He never said a word, just took the other two girls home, took me home, took off his belt, gave me one huge hiding and sent me to bed. The next morning, I came downstairs and said I was sorry and he said, "You have had your hiding. It's all forgotten. Just don't do it again."

I remember when Robert was born. It was 3 days after my birthday and Ron had been upstairs while Norma was having her home birth. I heard the baby cry and the next thing Ron came bounding down the stairs to Andrew and me, so excited, and shouting "it's a boy."

I stayed on with Ron and Norma until Dad had his massive heart attack. At that time Gwen, Tony and Ricky were in England on holiday. So, in June 1965 Gwen, Tony, Ricky, Sue and I got a chartered plane from Gatwick airport to go back to Rhodesia. This plane was a 45-seater and appeared to be on borrowed time. We took three days to get back – leaving England on Thursday morning and arriving in Salisbury on Saturday night. I remember stopping over in Malta, Khartoum and

Nairobi. We were actually put up in a hotel in Malta while they fixed the plane. In Khartoum and Nairobi we were meant to be just refuelling but there were all sorts of things needing to be done. It was an experience never to be forgotten.

Back home Dad had now moved into a flat with Megan. It was a big flat facing out onto the Lomungundi Road, with three bedrooms and two bathrooms. Megan had the main bedroom with en-suite bathroom, Dad had another bedroom and Sue and I shared the third. We had a big veranda. It was a nice flat.

Rhodesia's schooling system was different to England and I was still in Standard 5. We still lived down the road from Avondale Junior School, which I joined until the end of the 1965. During this time, Dad had another heart attack. Megan came rushing into our bedroom in the early hours of the morning saying she was taking Dad to hospital. Dad was wriggling like mad on the floor with extreme pain. Megan just bundled him into the car and drove off very fast.

School holidays left me very much alone as I didn't really know anyone in the area, and Dad and Megan felt I was old enough to look after myself. I must say I was very naughty and got into lots of trouble. I remember breaking all the letterboxes open one day and tearing up everybody's post. The Warden of the flats told Dad and I think that is why he decided to send me off the boarding school again.

January 1966, it was back at boarding school, this time at Marendellas High School. Again, I hated every minute of it except the occasional visitors on Sundays. Peter or Sue used to visit me with their current partners and take me out. I don't ever remember Dad coming to visit me. In my second year at Marendellas High they announced the school uniform would be changing and I thought this was my opportunity to escape. I phoned Dad and told him, begging him to buy one for a school in Salisbury so I could come home and be a day boarder. We were also moving out of the flats to a house that was being built at Trail Road,

Mount Pleasant, so we didn't have to worry about the Warden at the flats.

After Easter in 1967 I went to Queen Elizabeth High School as a day boarder. Dad would drop me off on the way to his office and I would walk round to him at the end of the day for a lift home. Megan was very good to me, always buying me clothes or pieces of material for new clothes. She was very kind as well as being so clever and such a lady. I did like her. Again, I got up to mischief and was expelled as a day boarder, so at lunch time I had to go to Dad's office and spend the whole afternoon there doing my homework – served me right.

I remember Dad saying to me, "What do you want? You have a nice home, you have a good school and you have lots of clothes." I said, "Dad, all I want is your love." He would reply, "I am not a loving father; do you want another dress." I hated him for that and I don't think I stopped hating him until I was about twenty, because all I wanted was a Dad who would put his arms around me, give me a cuddle and talk with me, not talk at me.

I left Queen Elizabeth High School in November 1970 having sat 'O' Levels, but not expecting to pass – Dad had made me sit them. I got my first job in the Registry Office in Salisbury as a filing clerk while awaiting my results. When my results came out and were better than expected, it was a surprise to both Dad and myself! I went looking for a better job. I got an interview at Netherlands Bank (now Zimbank) in First Street (where Sue worked) and got a job as an NCR operator with Sue as my Supervisor.

I saved every penny I could, sold everything I had that was worth selling, so that I could get on a plane, go back to England and get away from Dad – I really hated him then. I didn't tell him I was doing this until I had bought my ticket and then I dropped the bomb shell by saying I am off to England in a month's time, in September. We had a massive row. He beat me badly and threw me out of the house with all my clothes.

I went next door and phoned my best friend Bridget. Her mother came to fetch me and take me back to their house. I remember staying with them for quite a while, but I also remember going home before leaving. Dad took me to the airport when I went. He drove me up to the airport, took my cases out of the boot of the car, and drove off. I saw myself off on September 2nd, 1971.

I was met in England by Chris and Jenny, who was wearing the shortest, tightest 'hot pants' I had ever seen. I stayed with Chris and Jenny for three months until they went off for a holiday to Rhodesia, when I moved into the YWCA in Acton. I stayed there for ten months until I got a job as a hotel receptionist, which included living accommodation. I also met David Mourton about that time. In July 1973, when Dad was visiting with Megan, he realised I was living with David and told us to get married, which we did. I made a try of our marriage, moving to Hertfordshire, where David was living, but this was all to no avail – it was clearly not meant to be. After just a few months we parted company and legally separated in 1974.

About a year later after that I met Jack and in May 1976 we started our life together. We visited Rhodesia together for a holiday over Christmas that year. In 1977 Jack and I got married and later that year our daughter Lucinda was born; then, in early 1980, we had our son Grant.

Finances became difficult, so Jack and I made the decision to go to Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) to start a new life, which we did in December 1980. Despite enjoying our life there, the political situation in Zimbabwe deteriorated, so we decided to return to Cambridgeshire, England in June 1986. We lived and raised our children there until 2002, when both of our children got married. Jack and I also parted company due to irreconcilable differences.

In 2003, I made a new life with Trevor. We still live in Cambridgeshire and enjoy life visiting Lucinda and her two children in Hampshire, and Grant and his two children in California.

Though I am settled in England I still refer to Rhodesia/Zimbabwe as 'home'. I feel I was very privileged to have grown up in such a beautiful country.



Paula and Trevor's wedding, March 2003

Conclusion

To the reader, this is a remarkable collection of memories and stories from a time and world that seems very different from the present. Yet for our father Joe, it was a natural progression from having to deal with the challenges fate threw at him to making the best of the situation to further his family's chances.

As children, we look back with mixed feelings on some of the hard knocks that life and Joe dealt us. But we also had love and a unique experience of growing up in Rhodesia/Zimbabwe. Like many who lived on that continent in countries before and after independence, we have predominantly fond memories of life in Africa, a place that for us meant 'home'.

Family get-togethers are rare and increasingly difficult to arrange, as we are spread across Britain and the world. We mourn the loss of Gwen and John.

This book is our opportunity to record and recapture memories of a father, our mothers, and our childhood. It is our gift to share with our own families and their future generations.

Hopefully, there will be others who wonder what it was like during this particular period of the 20th century. Now you can see it through the eyes of the Woodward in *Childhood in Africa*.

Josiah Woodward, known to friends and family as Joe, was born in 1916, the eldest son of a railwayman with a hard hand. To support the family, Joe had to give up his education at 14 and start work as a railway porter at London Paddington. He married Irene and became a signalman for GWR during WWII, despite several attempts to enlist.

Tragedy struck at war's end - his beloved Irene died. Joe had to give his four children away into care.

With new love, Hilda, Joe was slowly able to reunite the family, as they embarked on a fresh start in British Colonial Africa.

Now parents and grandparents themselves, Joe's children recall their memories of a childhood steeped in the red soil of Africa. From Nigeria to Rhodesia, and from Rhodesia to Zimbabwe, they shine a light on a child's view of life during the transition from colonial administration to independent Africa.

